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C L A S S I C S

The Works of the Gawain Poet:

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, Patience, Cleanness

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Edited by Ad Putter
and Myra Stokes

THE WORKS OF THE GAWAIN POET

*Pearl, Cleanness, Patience, Sir Gawain and the Green
Knight*



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THE WORKS OF THE GAWAIN POET

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Abbreviations

For a list of abbreviations of grammatical terms, please see the Glossary ([pp. 801–2](#)).

æW	<i>The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript</i> , ed. Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron
N	Anglo-Norman
ND	<i>Anglo-Norman Dictionary</i>
NTS	Anglo-Norman Texts Society
7	Authorized Version (of the Bible)
	<i>Cleanness</i> (in line references)
A	Gower, <i>Confessio Amantis</i>
MA	Classiques Français du Moyen Age
EL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
	Chaucer, <i>The Canterbury Tales</i>
MF	<i>Dictionnaire du Moyen Français</i>
OST	<i>Dictionary of the Older</i>

T	<i>Scottish Tongue</i>
TS	<i>Destruction of Troy</i>
	Early English Text Society
	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> (in line references)
GP	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
A	<i>Morte Arthure</i> (alliterative verse version, ed. Hamel)
E	Middle English
ED	<i>Middle English Dictionary</i>
LR	<i>Modern Language Review</i>
ode	Modern English
S	manuscript
E	Old English
ED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
F	Old French
N	Old Norse
A	<i>Parlement of the Thre Ages</i>
	<i>Patience</i> (in line references)
	<i>Pearl</i> (in line references)
	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>
MLA	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association</i>
	<i>Piers Plowman</i>
ES	<i>Review of English Studies</i>
	Rolls Series
C	<i>Studies in the Age of Chaucer</i>
TF	Société des Anciens Textes Français
F	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> (in titles in secondary sources in the

Bibliography)

Siege of Jerusalem

Scottish National Dictionary

Scottish Text Society

St Erkenwald

Sir Gawain and the Green

Knight, ed. Tolkien and

Gordon, 2nd edn revised

Norman Davis

Wars of Alexander

Winner and Waster

Introduction

THE POEMS AND THE POET

The four poems included in this edition are the sole contents of London, British Library MS Cotton Nero A.x.¹ This small manuscript was copied around 1400, and the poems cannot be very much earlier, since one of them, *Cleanness*, is demonstrably indebted to *Mandeville's Travels*,² written in 1356 or 1367.³ The manuscript makes up in fidelity to the texts what it lacks in finish and fashion; it is certainly not a *de luxe* production, and may have been competently home-made especially for these poems, rather than produced in a professional scriptorium. It was written by only one scribe, with a few corrections (and hypercorrections⁴) by a second hand. The scribe was careful, not prone to errors, though his script is not a standard one for the time and has been described as having 'a very individualistic, small, sharp, angular character'.⁵ Rubrication is non-ornate and functional, consisting simply of enlarged capitals to mark structural divisions (and, in *Cleanness* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, smaller ones to mark significant narrative moments within those larger sections). Twelve accompanying illustrations (eleven full-page, one half-page) were added shortly after the text was

written. English books of this period were rarely illustrated, and full-page pictures are completely without precedent.⁶ In style, too, the illustrations are unusual. Relatively independent from iconographic traditions, they are more remarkable for their attempts to reflect the particular ‘texts and significant moments within them’⁷ than for their technique (which is limited) or beauty. The poems themselves are extant only in this manuscript and do not appear to have attracted much notice at the time.

All four texts are almost certainly the work of the same poet. They share, linguistically, the same dialect (North-West Midland) and date (late fourteenth century), for there is not much sign of the layering or inconsistency that would suggest that the poet’s language was not substantially the same as that of the scribe(s) who copied his poems.⁸ The poems also have pronounced similarities in style, alliterative collocations, procedure (for instance, *Patience* and *Cleanness* are both homilies based on a text drawn from the New Testament Beatitudes and exemplified by Old Testament narratives), themes and preoccupations (the pervasive interest in ‘courtesy’ in general, and the rituals of the feast in particular, being the most obvious example⁹). Nothing is known of this poet except what can be deduced from the poems. The dialect indicates that he came from south-east Cheshire, a provenance confirmed by the topographical features and associated terminology of the often precisely depicted landscapes in *Sir Gawain*.¹⁰ Though some critics have surmised an

association with the royal court in London,¹¹ there is no evidence that the poems circulated outside this dialect area.

Cheshire was a thriving world of its own at this period. Partly because of its status as a County Palatine (which conferred upon its earls semi-royal privileges), it regarded itself as separate from the rest of England (Cheshire men spoke of ‘going into England’¹²), and had a sturdy sense of its own political and cultural identity.¹³ It provided the well-known Cheshire archers who formed Richard II’s bodyguard, and John Gower knew it as home to *gentes bellatrices* [warlike folk], fiercely loyal to the king.¹⁴ Its people could be as rough as its weather and its landscape, which could provide shelter for the lawless,¹⁵ especially in the Wirral.¹⁶ But it had also a lively cultural life, and was markedly active in a number of arts and crafts. Chester possessed a major mint, and was a centre for moneyers and goldsmiths; the whole surrounding area specialized in the production of fine metalwork.¹⁷ An important seaport into which came furs, wines and other goods, it was a centre ‘for luxury goods and specialized services’.¹⁸ The production of cloth and clothing played an important part in the local economy. The upper ranks of society had an architectural presence, not only in Chester castle and various monasteries and abbeys, but also in a number of ‘elegant mansions, many of them set apart in parkland’, with which the Cheshire–Lancashire area was ‘bejewelled’;¹⁹ and in this connection it may be noted that *The Boke of Curtesye* is among a number of

significant texts to have been copied in Cheshire.²⁰

For, most importantly, Cheshire lay at the centre of an area that had a strong and distinctive literary culture, and a diverse selection of some of the most important works of the period was composed in the county. Ranulph Higden, author of the *Polychronicon*, an influential and encyclopaedic world history in Latin, was a monk of St Werburgh's Abbey (now Chester Cathedral), and brothers from this monastery and from others in the area copied not only Latin texts but also English poems.²¹ The *Stanzaic Life of Christ* is also a Cheshire work, and John Barton, author of one of the oldest French grammars, *Donait françois* (early fifteenth century), was proud, not only of his Paris education, but also of his Cheshire birth and upbringing, which he mentions in the prologue to his book. The town also had its own cycle of mystery plays, though these may be post-fourteenth century. The Cheshire gentry, furthermore, seem (from somewhat later evidence) to have included reading and writing men who took an active interest in literature,²² as testified by the poems of his own which Humfrey Newton of Pownell (1466–1536) copied into his commonplace book²³ and by the Stanley poems, a group of poems celebrating the Stanley family, who were Cheshire magnates.²⁴ Most crucially, the county was situated at the heart of that area that had pioneered the so-called 'Alliterative Revival': that is, the use in new and substantial poems of a modified form of the unrhymed alliterative metre in which Anglo-Saxon verse had been written – the metre of

Cleanness, *Patience* and *Sir Gawain*. This literary movement was associated especially with the west and the north, and Cheshire was thus pre-eminently exposed to its influence and made important contributions to it: the poet of one of the best of its products, *St Erkenwald*, second only to *Sir Gawain* in literary merit,²⁵ was a Cheshire man,²⁶ as probably were the poets both of one of the earliest extant exercises in the metre, *Winner and Waster* from c.1352,²⁷ and of one of the last, *Scotish Ffeilde*, whose subject is the battle of Flodden (1513) and which was written by someone who proclaims himself to have been a gentleman of Baguley in Cheshire (lines 416–19). Likewise associated with the west and the north were related experiments in highly florid stanzaic and rhyming forms of alliterating verse. Some of these poems are in eight-line stanzas, such as ‘Marie Mayden, Moder Mylde’ and ‘Ilk a wys wiht scholde wake’,²⁸ both from Cheshire;²⁹ others, such as *Awntyrs off Arthure*, *Summer Sunday*, *Pistel of Susan* and *Three Dead Kings*, were written in the newly fashionable thirteen-line bob-and-wheel stanza. This is relevant both to the elaborate stanzas of *Pearl* (written in alliterating lines of rhyming verse) and to the novel use in *Sir Gawain* of a rhyming bob-and-wheel (see Foreword to *Sir Gawain*, p. 244) to round off varying numbers of *unrhymed* alliterative lines, and so group them into ‘stanzas’. Cheshire thus forms a background pertinent, not only to the assured handling of the colourful metres used in the Cotton Nero poems, but also to their equally colourful alternation between

stormy energies (hunts, cataclysms, snowstorms) and the closely described intricacies of cultural constructs and rituals, mealtime etiquette, courtly manners and courtesies, castle with hunting park, nautical tackle and manoeuvres, fabrics, furnishings, costumes and, especially, jewels and metalwork. Such topics were popular in alliterative verse, but are developed by this poet with unrivalled vigour, texture and wealth of specific detail.

Apart from his provenance, only more general facts can be deduced about the author. He appears to have had rather more than a basic schooling and to have read widely in Latin, French and English. As the notes to the poems will illustrate, he not only knew the Bible (in its Latin Vulgate form) extremely well indeed, but could also cope with demanding Latin verse, for *Cleanness* and *Patience* show him to have been familiar with Latin verse paraphrases of the Bible.³⁰ He had certainly read with close attention the French texts that formed the core of well-thought-of and polite literature at this period: he accurately paraphrases a passage from *Le Roman de la rose*, citing its continuator by name, at lines 1057–64 of *Cleanness*, a poem for which he also used a French text of *Mandeville's Travels*; and *Sir Gawain* shows him to have read intensively and extensively in French chivalric romance (especially the lengthy cycle of prose romances known as the Vulgate *Lancelot*, the romances of Chrétien de Troyes and probably also those of the Anglo-Norman Hue de Rotelande³¹). His familiarity and ease with French loan words, including

some highly rare and specialized ones, likewise suggests a man widely conversant with French.

Since the descriptions of such things as castle architecture, hunts and the products of goldsmithery are highly detailed and technical, the poet must also have had at least access to courtly and sophisticated environments, though in what capacity, and whether ecclesiastical or secular, it is hard to tell. The familiarity with the Bible and biblical verse, and the use of a homiletic structure in *Cleanness* and *Patience*, might suggest he had a clerical education, but, if so, he must have remained in minor orders, for the death of a daughter (the theme of *Pearl*, a poem narrated in the first person) indicates that he was not celibate, as priests were required to be. When he refers to Church sermons and rituals, he certainly places himself with the congregation rather than with the officiating priest ('The prest us schewes', *Pe* 1210; cf. *Pa* 9). And, since some of his theological statements are distinctly eccentric (see Foreword to *Cleanness*, pp. 91–2), it is hard to imagine him as an academically trained theologian. It may be that a clerical training either gave way to, or was supplemented by, some secular activity, since he might have had family or personal connections with the jewellery and/or mercery trades (see Foreword to *Pearl*, pp. 9–10), which, since jewels were often stitched into costumes, were closely connected.³²

Of his personal life, he tells us two things, one probably, the other certainly, true. He indicates in *Patience* that he had known poverty (35, 46, 528),

which would not be surprising for a cleric who could not progress beyond minor orders. The claim functions partly as a *captatio benevolentiae* [courting the good will of the hearer], for the poet does not want to disimplicate himself from the patient endurance of adversity which he preaches. But the rhetorical stratagem would sadly backfire if he were known to be in comfortable circumstances. For things at this period were not as they are today, when a dust jacket can give information on an actual author, between whom and the 'I' of his fiction there can be wide discrepancies. Such inconsistencies at this time would have caused confusion to no artistic purpose. Many poems (the present ones included) may have circulated first or exclusively among a local audience, and it is unlikely that the wry claim to personal experience of poverty in *Patience* is one that such an audience would have known to be false.

These and other considerations apply with even more force to the autobiographical 'fact' the poet attributes to himself in *Pearl*: the death of a nearly-two-year-old daughter. It was and is still sometimes argued that this claim is not necessarily true. But the poem would make no sense at all if it were false: the text owes its emotional power precisely to the assumption that the poet is himself deeply, personally and painfully implicated in the situation he represents, that his 'I' really is 'I'. Elegies, including medieval ones (such as Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, occasioned by the death of Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster, and Boccaccio's *Olympia*, an elegy on his

lost daughter Violante), presuppose that the death mourned and other purported ‘facts’ are real. That is one of the rules of the genre. The dream-vision mode of *Pearl* is also importantly relevant here. This was the framework by which a poet signalled that the forthcoming matter had no ‘authority’ in the form of history or a pre-existing story, the events having therefore as much or as little authority as a dream of his own, which might be fantasy or vision (the several different categories into which dreams were at this period divided was useful here).³³ It is thus in a dream which the poet classifies as a *veray avysoun* [true vision: 1184] that the meeting with the spirit of the poet’s dead daughter is depicted as occurring: i.e. it is not something that history books will vouch for, but has a kind of higher truth. From these same rules of the genre it followed that the narrating ‘I’, the sole authority for the content of the poem, represented the poet and that any biographical data given were to be taken as reflecting real life.³⁴ This explains why it was most often in the context of the dream-vision that vernacular poets identified themselves, giving their actual names and introducing other details of their real lives. For instance, the dreamer in Chaucer’s *House of Fame* is addressed as ‘Geffrey’ (729) by the eagle, who likewise alludes to his work as a customs official (652–3).³⁵ The conventions governing both elegy and dream-vision thus indicate that the ‘I’ who speaks as a bereaved father in *Pearl* is one with the poet himself.

The poems are here presented in the order in which

they appear in the manuscript (*Pearl*, *Cleanness*, *Patience*, *Sir Gawain*), since that is as likely as any other to reflect the order of composition. It is often in elegy that a talent for verse is first prompted to sustained formal organization of itself. 'The Death of Friends, first gave my Muse a Birth', claimed one later poetess,³⁶ implying that it was not uncommon for an amateur talent to attempt at such moments a first major original work. The poet of the highly accomplished *Pearl* had plainly written before, but it may well have been at the death of his daughter that he first endeavoured to write something that should be worthy of being recorded and preserved. *The Book of the Duchess* seems similarly to be the earliest recorded work of Chaucer that has come down to us, though he may well have translated part of the *Romaunt of the Rose* and composed at least some 'balades, roundels, virelayes' (*Legend of Good Women* F423) before that. Of the remaining long-line alliterative poems in the present manuscript, it makes sense that the two exercises in the 'classic' form of the metre, *Cleanness* and *Patience*, should have preceded *Sir Gawain*, where that metre receives innovative refinement. And, as between the two verse homilies, it likewise makes sense to assume that a line like 'Godes glam to him glod, that him unglad made' (*Pa* 63) should have come to the mind of a poet who had already used the alliterative metre to produce the more predictable collocation found at C 499, 'Then Godes glam to hem glod that gladed hem alle'. The poet was certainly, even in *Cleanness*, already a master

of the collocational and lexical repertoire and manoeuvres of the alliterative metre, which he everywhere handles with expressiveness and virtuosity.

DIALECT AND INFLECTIONS

Since, in the preceding section, some significance has been attached to provenance, the non-specialist might like to have an idea of the kind of evidence on which localization in the North-West Midlands is based, and of how that dialect differs from the London English of Chaucer. Some of the chief *northern* characteristics of the poem texts are:

- the inflection *-es* (rather than southern *-eth*) in third-person singular (*he loves, he holdes, he dredes*); the north tended to extend the *-s* inflection to other persons, so that we also find it used (instead of *-est*) for second-person singular both in the present (*thou blames, thou thretes, thou says*) and past (*thou lestes* [lost], *thou kyssedes*), and on occasion for present plurals (*thay* [trees] *borgounes and beres; yow, that ... weldes*³⁷). The ending *-(e)s* (rather than the southern *-eth*) is also used for the plural (or polite) imperative: *Dos teches me; Displeases not if I speke errour*
- the present participle suffix *-ande* (as opposed to *-inde/ende* or *-ing* in the south): *that malscrande* [stupefying] *mere; fannande fax* [fanning hair]; *gladande glory*
- the auxiliary *can* (as opposed to the southern *gan*), found in these poems with the characteristically western rounding of *a* to *o* before nasals (*m, n, ng*): *con take* [did take], *con answare* [did answer]
- the verbs *make* and *take* can appear in contracted form: *he mas him ... mery; thay ta me; tan on honde* [taken in hand]
- the adverb *bylive* [promptly], which figures as *blive* in southern texts: *raykes* [goes] *bylive; neghed* [approached] *bylive*
- several items of vocabulary that are northernisms: *muckel* [great(ly)], *farande* [fine], *brent* [steep: G 2165], *stange* [pole: G 1614], *bodworde* [news] (C 473)

- a high number of words of Scandinavian origin: as well as such words as *carp* [speak], *ill*, [bad(ly)], *kyrk* [church], *ugly* [sinister], which were common in northern dialects, there are a number of colourful and unusual ones, such as *skayned* [grazed], *snart* [smartingly] and *snitered* [snowed] (G 2167, 2003)

A dialect area well to the north is, however, ruled out by the *absence* of some features that would indicate it, and by the presence of some that were more characteristic of the south:

- there is no regular retention of Old English long *a* (which had been rounded in the south to *o*). Forms in *a* are the exception, and often occur only for rhyming purposes. Thus, where rhyme requires *a*, *brade* and *mare* each occur once (at *Pe* 138 and 145 respectively), and *hame* twice (G 1534, 2451), but all three words are otherwise spelled with *o*, that vowel being confirmed by rhyme at e.g. G 967 (*brode* : *goode*). The evidence thus suggests a poet familiar with *a* forms, but more regularly using *o* forms
- northern forms such as *gud* [good], *buk* [book] and *sall* [shall] are not found
- though the northern spelling *qu-* is often used for words beginning with *hw-* in Old English (e.g. *quat* and *quen*, regularized in the present edition to *what* and *when*), *hw-* derived words (even when spelled *qu-*) alliterate on *w* (e.g. MS *querso* [wheresoever] alliterates with *world* and *worschipes* at G 1227), and there is no sign of the falling together of the sounds of Old English *cw-* and *hw-* (leading to the alliteration of e.g. *what* with *queen*) which occurs in some dialects to the north of Cheshire (as in *The Wars of Alexander* and in the Lancashire poem *The Destruction of Troy*)³⁸
- third-person-plural present-tense verbs (though they sometimes have no ending, sometimes *-e*, and sometimes northern *-s*) frequently have the *-en* inflection typical of the more conservative Midlands, confirmed by metre at e.g. G 1163: 'What! Thay [the deer] brayen and bleden, by bonkes thay dyen'³⁹

An area towards the south of the northern dialect region is therefore indicated, and, as between east and

west, the following features, among others, are *westernisms*:

- the occasional unvoicing of final *-b*, *-g* and *-d* to *-p*, *-k* and *-t*, especially after nasals. We have regularized many such spellings where they serve no metrical purpose (e.g. MS *3onke bynk* at *G* 1526 appears in our text as *yong thing*), but *fonte* [found] at *Pe* 170, for instance, has not been regularized, because it is required (and confirmed) by rhyme. Final *-d* after an unstressed syllable was also unvoiced in the west, and occurs in e.g. *Hadet* [beheaded] at *G* 681
- the form *ho* [she], which occurs frequently (and is confirmed by alliteration at *G* 948)
- the raising of *o* to *u* before *-ng* (which makes possible the rhyme of ‘long’ and ‘strong’ with ‘tongue’ at *G* 32–6)
- the rounding of *a* to *o* before a nasal, witnessed in e.g. *bonk* [bank], *plonttes* [plants], etc

Inflections were lost more rapidly from northern dialects than from elsewhere, and there is evidence from rhyme and metre that the poet did not always use or sound the ones discussed below where metre did *not* require them. But metre often does require, as well as medial *-e-* and adverbial *-e*, a sounded final *-e* for: first-person present-tense verbs; plural verbs; infinitives (which can also end in *-y* and in *-(e)n*); weak adjectives (used after the definite article *the*, after demonstrative and possessive adjectives such as *that* and *his*, and in vocatives); plural adjectives; dative nouns. Final *-e* is historically justified in these cases and this poet, like others from the North Midlands, made good use of it.⁴⁰ The *-es* termination for plural or possessive nouns and for present-tense verbs, as well as past tense and participle *-de/te* and *-ed*, likewise often has syllabic value, especially when applied to monosyllabic stems. These inflections often

assist the poet in supplying an unstressed syllable demanded by either (1) the iambics of *Pearl* and of the bob-and-wheel in *Sir Gawain* or (2) the alliterative line, which required a dip of two syllables (or more) in the second half of the line and (usually) between the alliterating stresses of the first half of the line, as well as one unstressed syllable at line ending (see the section on [alliterative metre](#) below).⁴¹ The following examples are representative:

Of all my joy the highë gate (*Pe* 395: weak adjective)
to flyë ful highë (*G* 524b: infinitive; adverb)
And then he cryëd so cler that kennë myght allë (*Pa* 357:
past tense; infinitive; plural pronoun)
All that glydës and gos (*C* 325a: present tense)
I durë to longë (*Pa* 488b: first-person present-tense verb;
adverb)
his luflychë deghter (*C* 939b: plural disyllabic adjective)
on wyngës ful scharpë (*C* 475b: plural noun; plural
adjective)
of Arthurës wonderes (*G* 29b: possessive)
blenk on the snawë [glitter on the snow] (*G* 2315b: dative)

THE ALLITERATIVE METRE

Alliterative metre is based, not on a regular number of syllables in lines linked by rhyme (a metrical form imported from Latin and French), nor on iambic alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, but on a regular number of stresses linked by alliteration. Each line has four stresses (also known as staves), two in the first half-line (the a-verse) and two in the second half-line (the b-verse), with a caesura, or metrical pause, dividing the two halves of the line. In the so-called ‘classic’ form of the metre, alliteration links the first three of the stresses, but not the last, in an *aa/ax* pattern:

Words beginning with vowels alliterate in these poems (and some others) with any other vowel or with *h*:-

Thay hondel there His owne body and usen hit bothë (11)

The sounds *s*-, *sk*-, *sp*-, *st*- and *sh*- are normally treated as distinct, each alliterating only with itself:

Then segges to the soverayn sayden thereafter (93)

Stightled with the steward, stad in the hallë (90)

On spec of a spot may spedë to myssë (551)

Ascaped over the skyre wateres, and scaylëd the wallës
(1776)

Thus in the last-quoted line the Norse-derived *skyre* [bright] has replaced the Anglo-Saxon-derived *schyr(e)* found elsewhere in the manuscript, the poet being very ready to exploit, for metrical as for stylistic purposes, the Scandinavian loan words in which his dialect was so rich (see p. xviii above).

Alliteration can fall on a final consonant which, in pronunciation, attaches itself to a following word beginning with a vowel; C 1779 thus alliterates on *n*:

Withinne an houre of the night an entre thay hadë

Alliterative needs may be satisfied by an unaccustomed stress on a prefix rather than on the root syllable, something which (especially in the case of Romance loan words) figures so frequently as to suggest that it was an accepted practice in alliterative poetry:⁴³

Then cònfourme thee to Cryst, and thee clene makë
(1067)

Prèsented him the presoneres in pray that thay token
(1297)

The possibility of stress on prefixes gave poets useful options. For instance, some words occur with alliterative stress falling either on the prefix or on the root: compare ‘He **d**èvised his **d**remës’ (1604a) with ‘Devised he the **v**esselment’ (1288a); ‘Was **d**isstryed with **d**istresse’ (1160a) with ‘I schal **s**trenkle my **d**istrèsse’ (307a); ‘Oght that was **ù**ngoderly’ (1092a) with ‘Thou art a **g**ome **u**ngòderly’ (145a);⁴⁴ and ‘He brek the **b**arers as **b**ylive’ (1239a) with ‘to **s**ech him **b**ylivë’ (1615b).

Alliterative stress falls generally on open-class words – classes of words to which new items are easily added (nouns, adjectives, adverbs and most verbs). Closed-class words (grammatical-function words such as prepositions, pronouns, auxiliary verbs) do not normally bear alliterative stress. Not all open-class words bear stress, however (even if they alliterate: as in *G* 2: ‘The *burgh* **b**rittene and **b**rent to **b**rondes and **a**ske’). This is frequently the case with such common words as ‘thing’, ‘man’, ‘lord’, ‘take’, ‘have’, with adverbs of degree, quantifying adjectives, and with *adjective* + *noun* and *adverb* + *verb* combinations:

And if He lovës *clene* layk that is our lord richë (1053)
So *brod* bulde in a bay that **b**lonkes myght renne (1392)
Schot with his **s**chulderes his *fayrë* **s**chelde under (*G* 2318)

The *man* **m**arred on the **m**olde, that **m**ycht him not **h**ydë
(*Pa* 479)

Though other patterns can occur in *Sir Gawain*, the *aa/ax* rule is followed in *Cleanness* and *Patience* with such regularity as to justify editors in regarding as corrupt any non-*aa/ax* lines (e.g. *C* 345, 422, 427)

and in emending them wherever a plausible emendation suggests itself.

Recent research by Hoyt Duggan⁴⁵ and by Thomas Cable⁴⁶ has established certain rules governing the metrical shape of the b-verse (the second half of the line): *one* of the two stresses *must* be preceded by a 'long' dip – that is, by more than one unstressed syllable – and *only one* such 'long' dip can figure in the verse. The b-verses of the lines quoted above and below furnish examples, and also illustrate the operation of another rule: the line must end in one (and only one) unstressed syllable. That this is a rule (and not merely a strong tendency, as Duggan himself describes it) is readily demonstrable. Where the poet had a choice of forms, the disyllabic one is regularly selected at line-ending position: compare line-ending *selven* (1745), *spylled* (1248), *schined* (1532) with non-line-ending *self* (1418), *spylt* (1220), *schon* (G 772, 956). Some disyllabic forms are found only at line ending: *lys* [lies], for instance, appears as *lygges* only at line ending (1126 and 1792). Similarly, *now* only ever appears at line ending as *nowthe* (*Pa* 412; *G* 1251, 1784, 1934, 2466). No syllable bearing secondary stress can occur at line ending: thus suffixes such as *-ing* or *-ly/lych* do not figure in that position, nor does the second syllable of such words as *warlow* or *coltour*; in short, virtually the only vowel sounds that can occur at line ending are *schwa* (the indistinct vowel heard in the second syllable of, for instance, *china*) and unstressed *i* (as in the second syllable of *merry*).

With regard to the a-verse, a long dip (at least two

unstressed syllables) between the two stresses is the norm, and this poet makes deliberate and demonstrable adjustments to achieve it. For instance, adverbs and adjectives in *-lych(e)* are used in these poems only for metrical reasons: unlike *-ly* (the poet's usual, unmarked form, which was always monosyllabic in later Middle English), the suffix *-lych* permitted the addition of inflectional *-e* (though this has been mostly lost from the *-lych* spellings of the manuscript), so producing a disyllabic suffix.⁴⁷ This is clear from both a- and b-verses:

In His comlychë court, that kyng is of blissë (546)
And other luflychë lyght, that lemëd ful fayrë (1486)
Of that wynnelychë Wye that wonës in heven (1807)
At this causë the knight comlychë hadë (G 648)

The poet's other forms of these words (*lovely/lufly*, *comly* and *wynne* [joyous, glorious]) would not have permitted the *-e* inflection for adverb (at G 648), plural adjective (at 1486) or weak adjective (at 546 and 1807) that in these lines ensures the inter-stress long dip in the a-verse. The insertion of redundant *for* before *to* + *infinitive* is likewise, in this manuscript and elsewhere, metrically motivated, and that too occurs to ensure the inter-stress two-syllable dip in the a-verse:

And had a wyf for to welde, a worthilyche quenë (1351)
Now is set for to serve Satanas the blakë (1449)

Insertion of *ful* [very] – before, for instance, a post-positioned adjective – is likewise a common metrical manoeuvre used to the same end:

Was long and ful large and ever ilyche swarë (1386)
Then a dotage ful depe drof to his hertë (1425)

The disyllabic dip between the two alliterating staves is dispensed with only where the want of it is compensated by an opening dip of four or more syllables – e.g. ‘And there was the kyng caght’ (1215a) – or by a verse-ending dip that is long (two or more syllables) and/or heavy (i.e. a syllable with secondary stress such as is banned from line ending), e.g. ‘In the burgh of **B**abyloyn’ (1335a).

Since English (unlike French) is a stress-timed rather than a syllable-timed language, the alliterative metre is in some ways more natural to it than are octosyllabic or decasyllabic iambics. But there is another sense in which it is the metre ‘native’ to English. The four-stressed alliterating line had been the metrical norm in Anglo-Saxon verse before the Norman Conquest, and that Old English alliterative line is evidently the ancestor of the Middle English one. Some of the alliterative synonyms used in Old English verse also continue into Middle English alliterative poems, though a number of them were, by this time, otherwise rare or archaic usages. The synonyms for ‘man’, for instance – *burn*, *freke*, *gome*, *hathel*, *lede*, *renk*, *schalk*, *segge*, *wye* – are all found in both Old and Middle English alliterative verse.

Historically and prosodically ‘natural’ to English though it may be, that word should not be taken to imply that alliterative verse is therefore any less ‘artful’ or rule-bound than rhymed verse, though the absence of rhyme and regularly recurring identical feet may make it look at first blush ‘freer’ than, for instance, the rhymed iambic pentameters of Chaucer.

As will by now be clear, there are complex rules regarding rhythm and alliteration that impose no less pattern on normal or prose usage – and which will, for instance, occasionally necessitate the same artful deviation from normal word order as occurs in rhymed verse. When, for example, Belshazzar’s scholars fail to interpret ‘What tythyng ne tale, tokened tho draghtes’ (1557), and he sends for men ‘That were wyse of wychecraft, and warlowës other’ (1560), the word order in the b-verses is dictated by the alliterative *aa/ax* pattern (which, in the strict form of the metre observed in *Cleanness* and *Patience*, cannot be varied to *aa/xa*), and by the requirements for a long dip in the b-verse and for a single unstressed syllable at line ending, which would preclude ‘tho draghtes tokened’ or ‘other warlowes’.

Pronounced final *-e* plays an important role in the rhythms of alliterative verse. Sometimes this *-e* is inflectional (see ‘[Dialect and Inflections](#)’ above), and sometimes it is an organic part of the word. In order to hear the metre, those unfamiliar with the grammatical and etymological principles which dictate what *-es* are sounded need only remember to sound such *-es* as will ensure the two-syllable dip between the a-verse stresses and will produce the two-syllable dip that must occur once in the b-verse, and should bear in mind that all alliterative long lines end in one unstressed syllable. Thus:

That all that longëd to luther ful lodly He hated (1090)
Wel clener then any craft couthë devisë (1100)
Bot if my gaynlychë God such gref to me woldë (*Pa* 83)
Then eft lastës hit likkës, He loses hit illë (1141)

A reliable rule of thumb is that all instances of *-e* that effectively turn monosyllables into disyllables must be sounded (as in the lines above). After an unstressed syllable, however, *-e*, final or in *-es* or *-ed* terminations, was often unsounded:

Then confourme thee to Cryst, and thee clene makë,
That ever is polysed as playn as the perle selven. (1067–8)

The required long dip (of two or more syllables) will normally indicate where such an *-e* needs to be pronounced, as with *relykës* (< OF *reliques*) or *solemnë* (< OF *solempne*) in the following lines:

And robbëd the rèlygioun of relykës allë (1156)
He sat on Salomones solie on solemnë wysë (1171)

‘The Alliterative Revival’ is a phrase often used to categorize the group of narrative poems – which includes *Cleanness*, *Patience* and *Sir Gawain* – written from about the mid-fourteenth century onwards in the alliterative metre that is otherwise virtually unrecorded after Layamon’s *Brut* (composed around 1200 during the transition from Old to Middle English). But there are problems with the term ‘revival’. It can scarcely be the case that these poets returned to a mode for which practically their only models were Anglo-Saxon and very early Middle English. Quite apart from the absence of any evidence as to significant manuscript circulation of those earlier poems, the changes in English were sufficient to have rendered that corpus far from easily accessible to fourteenth-century readers. The similarities with Old English verse (the four-stressed *aa/ax* metre and the many shared items of ‘poetic’ vocabulary) are

unlikely, on the other hand, to have been the result of an alliterative metre reinvented without reference to its forerunners. There was obviously some kind of continuing tradition, and what was ‘revived’ in the mid-fourteenth century was probably not the metre itself, but the use of it (now that English – as opposed to French or Latin – had re-established itself as a medium suitable for serious verse) for major and lengthy poems. The alliterative poets were thus doing something new in their refurbishment of the old, and should not be regarded as ‘dated’ in their choice of metre. The poet of *Cleanness* was certainly familiar with the French models for rhyming verse, as his extended reference to *Le Roman de la rose* at 1057–64 indicates; and *Pearl* and the bob-and-wheel lines in *Sir Gawain* show that he could handle iambic and rhyming verse very effectively if he chose. The alliterative metre was not selected, therefore, for want of acquaintance or skill with the more ‘modern’ (though by this time somewhat predictable) metrical forms. The poet was plainly an enthusiast for the new/old alliterative mode, for he shows a wide familiarity with its collocational patterns and stylistic techniques – and he handles the line to produce many striking and very varied effects.

EDITORIAL PRACTICE

In line with the conventions of this series, the *orthography* of the manuscript (and of texts cited in the endnotes) has been partially modernized and regularized. The obsolete characters thorn and yogh (*þ* and *ȝ*) have been replaced by their modern

equivalents: *þ* by *th*, and *ȝ* (used in the manuscript to represent a number of different sounds) by, variously, *gh*, *w*, *s* and *y*, and where *yogh* represents a vowel, it has been omitted without replacement: thus, for example, *þe* becomes *the*, and *riȝt*, *boȝed*, *fautleȝ*, *tryȝe* [try] become *right*, *bowed*, *fautles* and *trye*. The idiosyncratic *-tȝ* in words such as *hatȝ* and *watȝ* has been replaced with *-s*. Where *w* represents a vowel (e.g. *remwe*, *grwe*, *knwe*), it has been replaced by *u* or by whatever more familiar spelling of the word in question is elsewhere used by the scribe. In medieval spelling *i* and *j* were interchangeable; we have used whichever symbol accords with modern practice: for instance, *iuggement* becomes *juggement*. The letters *u* and *v* were earlier distinguished by position in the word: *v* was typically used initially (*vnto* [unto], *vs* [us], etc), and *u* medially (*preued* [proved], *saue* [save], etc); we have transcribed these letters in accord with the modern convention, using *u* to represent a vowel sound, and *v* a consonant.

We have also attempted to simplify the various *spellings and forms* found for any given word, following J. A. Burrow's practice in his Penguin edition of *Sir Gawain*. Spelling was unstandardized in this period, and the scribe often uses a number of different spellings and/or dialectal or other forms for the same word. We have retained variants that reflect distinct derivation, e.g. from Old English and Old Norse, and so 'though' figures as both *thogh* and *thagh*. But otherwise we have regularized, for instance, *man/mon* to *man*, *cast-/kest-* to *cast-*, *myght-/moght-* to *myght-*,

are/ar/arn(e) to *are*, *were/wer/weren/wern* to *were*, *hold-/hald-* to *hold-* (despite the fact that the *o* form figures only once in the manuscript), *saw/sey(en)/sye* to *saw(en)*, *sprang/sprong/spronge* to *sprang*. We have, that is, generally regularized the variants to whichever scribal form is least likely to confuse a modern English reader, even if the scribe uses that form only once, except where the variant is one required by the metre (thus *sprenged* is retained at the end of the alliterative line, where it supplies the line-final unstressed syllable that *sprang* would not supply: see p. xxiv). We have sometimes taken advantage of manuscript variation to make distinctions it does not consistently make: for instance, we have transcribed *Gawan* when the name alliterates on *g*, but *Gawayn* when iambic beat or rhyme falls on its second syllable. Only in exceptional cases, however, have we regularized to spellings that are not found in the manuscript.⁴⁸

Final *-e* is retained where it is metrically significant (see pp. xxvi–xxvii) and where it has a grammatical significance that the scribe's practice elsewhere suggests was usually observed. But a grammatically correct *-e* missing from the manuscript spelling has not been supplied where it is not metrically needed. We have not, however, hesitated to supply a grammatically and/or historically justifiable final *-e* where metre does require it. For, accurate and careful though the scribe generally seems to have been, he was not a poet, and often omitted a final *-e* that had in his dialect no necessity other than metrical. For instance, *myght* [could] is frequently found at line

ending, but not (except in the case of the MS forms *moghtes*, second-person singular, at C 655 and *moghten*, plural, at G 1953) written with the inflectional ending which conservative grammar would give it and which the line-ending position (where an unstressed syllable was a rule of the alliterative metre) requires. We have in all relevant cases transcribed the word *myghte*. Metrically irregular lines which are not susceptible of regularization by restoration of inflection or other obvious and minor emendation, and which make sense as they stand, have not been emended. But we have, as indicated, regularly restored such inflectional endings as the poet himself demonstrably used for the following metrical purposes (see [p. xxi](#)): to ensure iambic metre, or, in the alliterative line (on the rules of which see the previous section), to ensure the line-ending unstressed syllable, the single long dip required in the b-verse and (though here we have been less rigorous, since the rules are not yet finally established) the long dip usually required between the two alliterative stresses in the a-verse.⁴⁹ On some occasions, as in the case of *myghte*, we have emended to a form of the word which does not actually occur in the manuscript. And line-ending *-e* as it occurs in the manuscript has in some rare cases been retained even where it does not appear to be justified (e.g. *Gode* at C 1730), since the form may have some as yet unknown explanation.

Emendations made *metri causa* do not always figure in the list of editorial emendations provided at [pp. 794–800](#). Any word supplied or deleted is, of course,

included, as are even trivial occasions where the scribe has (e.g. by omitting a letter or a contraction sign) produced an implausible form of the word we assume was intended. But in a normalized-spelling edition, it would not make sense to include all changes to manuscript *forms* of words. For example, in the last thirteen stanzas of *Sir Gawain*, modifications of the following kind do not figure in the list of emendations: to ensure the unstressed syllable required at line ending, historically justified final *-e* has been supplied – in, for instance, *faste* (2215: adverb), *lyghte* (2220: infinitive), *paye* (2247: < OF *paie*), *herte* (2277, 2438: < OE *heorte*), *myghte* (2291: past tense), *raghte* (2297: past tense), *maye* (2298: subjunctive), *nekke* (2310: OE *hnecca*), *hente* (2323: past participle), *tryste* (2325: plural imperative), *nighte* (2347: dative), *alse* (2360, 2513: a variant form of *als* used at line ending; cf. manuscript *alce* at 2492), *laste* (2497: weak and dative adjective as noun); line-ending *bihous* (2296) has been emended to *behoves*. In most cases these emendations are supported by forms and spellings found elsewhere in the manuscript. Final *-e* has similarly been supplied in order to ensure the b-verse has its required long dip (of two or more syllables) in the following cases: *greme* (2251: regularized to the form with etymological *-e* that the poet always elsewhere uses), *starte* (2286: infinitive), *comlyche* (2411: weak adjective), *gostlyche* (2461: adverb), *wyste* (2490: past-tense plural); and manuscript *venquyst* (2482) has, for the same reason, been emended to the recorded alternative form

venquished.

Punctuation, capitalization and word division follow modern practice. (There is no punctuation in the manuscript and few capitals, while word division is not always clearly marked, as spacing is irregular.) *Patience* and *Cleanness* are not always printed in the *quatrains* in which they are here presented, but there can be no doubt that the poet, like a number of others in the alliterative tradition,⁵⁰ wrote in four-line units.⁵¹ The scribe marks the beginning of every fifth line with two strokes in the left margin, and, since this is the same mark he uses in *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain* to signal what rhyme proves to be clearly a new stanza, we have interpreted the symbol as similarly marking off sections of text in the unrhymed poems. The sense, moreover, characteristically falls into four-line units. The quatrains in which we have laid out these poems thus clarify sense and structure, and provide the same welcome subdivision in long poems as do the rhyme-based stanzas in *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain*.

The on-page *footglosses* are fuller for *Sir Gawain* than for the other poems, as we have assumed this will usually be the first of the four poems (and sometimes the only one) which students will read and that, since it is deservedly famous, it may be read by non-specialists who have had no experience or training in Middle English. We have therefore, for *Sir Gawain*, footglossed anything that might cause difficulty to a modern reader. With the other poems, the footglosses are more sparing and used chiefly as a supplement to the *Glossary* – to elucidate features of syntax and

construction that might remain obscure even when individual words are understood or recognized, or to alert readers to ‘false friends’ (words for which the Glossary might not be consulted because they look familiar, but which have a sense different from that which they bear in Modern English). Otherwise, it is, for the texts other than *Sir Gawain*, generally only very unusual words that are footglossed, or those which occur only once in the manuscript, while for lexical elucidation in other cases the student is referred to the Glossary.

The *endnotes* are devoted to more detailed discussion of cruces, vocabulary, style, interpretation, sources, analogues, and to other matters not necessary to the explication of the immediate sense and significance, which is given in the footglosses (and in the Glossary). The *Bibliography* contains all material we have anywhere cited. Each of the poems is preceded by a *Foreword* which discusses genre, form and literary art and which ends with a few suggestions for further reading.

Where the poet is versifying the Bible, the equivalent passages from the Authorized Version are quoted serially at intervals – in bold italics, so that those wishing to compare the poem with its source can easily pick them out; where relevant, words or phrases from the Latin Vulgate the poet himself would have been following are also given (in italics); a slash divides AV from Vulgate chapter or verse numbering where the two diverge and where it is thought desirable to cite both. Since the endnotes are full and

frequent, cross-references to them are only in exceptional cases included in the footglosses.

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PEARL

Foreword

Pearl is a narrative told in the first person, and its narrative form is that of the dream-vision: a mourner falls into unconsciousness over the grave of what is gradually revealed to have been a daughter who died before reaching the age of two; he is transported in sleep to a jewelled landscape in which he encounters this lost 'pearl', now one of the élite 144,000 virgin brides of the Lamb (as described in Revelation 14); in the ensuing dialogue, she attempts to replace his mortal with her own divine perspective, and finally leads him to a literal sight of the heavenly Jerusalem (described, following Revelation 21–2, as constructed of jewels); when he attempts on impulse to join her in this place by crossing the river which divides him from it and her, and which he has been told he cannot cross, his dream is broken, and he wakes, regretting his disobedience and resigning himself to the will of God.

The poem is remarkable for both the richness and sophistication with which it develops the central image of the jewel and for its complementary beauty and intricacy of form. Form and imagery are in fact closely interrelated. The image of the 'perfect pearl' is used to concatenate and mark the gradual progression

from the human and earthly to the divine and glorious: it is, successively, what the child was to her father (1ff); the sign of her spiritual purity as a bride of the Lamb (271ff); the ‘pearl of great price’ (Matthew 13:45–6) which forms a scriptural figure of salvation and heaven (729ff); and the pearl of which each of the ‘pearly gates’ of the New Jerusalem consists (1037). Concatenation is also a feature of the verse form: one word is repeated from the last line of each stanza in the first line of the following one, this word remaining the same over five stanzas (in one case, six). This device divides the poem into different sections (marked by Roman numerals in the edited text) and confers upon each a lexical ‘key-note’ in the form of the refrain word. The ‘endeles rounde’ (738) perfection of the pearl (in all its varied significances) also finds a formal equivalent: the poem is itself circular, repeating in its last line the key words of its opening line, and its 101 stanzas (the same number as those of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*) also suggest a numerical equivalent to a cycle completed and rejoining its beginning at a higher level of significance. To create 101 stanzas in twenty sections, the poet had to make one section longer than the others: section XV, appropriately marked by the refrain words ‘never the lesse’, has six stanzas rather than the normal five. The numerical figure associated with perfection in the poem (144,000) is yet a further feature of its content that is imitated in its form – which is organized according to twelve-line stanza units and completes itself at line 1212 with an artistic

appropriateness that must have been primarily for the poet's private aesthetic satisfaction, since no indication of line numbering is given for verse in this, or any English, manuscript. In these ways, the poem pays tribute to the different kinds of perfection of the pearl and its 'preciousness' (to her father while she lived, and, in spiritual terms, to the God who glorified her and to whom she now belongs).

The poet imposes on himself a demanding stanzaic rhyme-scheme (*ababababbcbc*),¹ with the added restriction that the *c* rhymes must be continued (because of the use of a refrain word) throughout each five-stanza group. In addition, most lines have alliteration, although *Pearl* (unlike the other poems in the manuscript) is not written in the alliterative metre as such (on which, see [pp. xxi–xxvii](#)). Quite apart from having a different rhythm (iambic), *Pearl* is not a poem in which alliteration is a condition of metricality, and it is not therefore found in each and every line; but it does make a significant contribution to the rich music of the verse of this poem.

These heavy formal constraints are met in large part by an exceptionally wide and varied vocabulary, a lexical competence both flexible and inventive. An English word-stock (inherited from Anglo-Saxon), incorporating a number of dialect words peculiar to the region of the North-West Midlands, is supplemented by words of Scandinavian etymology (more numerous in areas, such as this one, which had been part of the Danelaw than in, for instance, Chaucer's London dialect); by a number of French-

derived words which extensive exposure to spoken and written French put within the poet's competence and understanding; by learned and technical words, both from the speculative and from the mechanical arts; and by the group of somewhat unusual and archaic words that formed a stock of 'poetic diction' traditionally used in verse written in the alliterative metre which the poet himself elsewhere uses (in *Cleanness*, *Patience* and *Sir Gawain*).² An ear which had registered variant pronunciations current slightly outside his own dialect area (especially rather further north), and variant stress-positioning in French loan words (e.g. *dàmysel*, *damysèlle*), occasionally helps him to fulfilment of rhyming, metrical or alliterative patterns – practices to which other poets of this period occasionally had recourse.

The metre is iambic tetrameter: that is, four stressed syllables each separated from the next by an unstressed syllable. Clashing stress – i.e. two stressed syllables in succession without intervening unstressed syllable(s) – is markedly avoided. Since English is stress-timed, not syllable-timed, the pulse of the line is not affected by the occasional inclusion of more than one unstressed syllable in the 'dips' between the stresses. This in fact happens less often than might appear, since elision of vowels in unstressed syllables (especially before liquid or nasal consonants) is common in spoken English and is certainly to be assumed at a number of points in this text, as in the following lines, where the italicized vowels should not be sounded: 'Of còuntes [countess], dàmysel, pàr ma

fày' (489); 'Blòd and wàter of bròdë wòunde' (650); 'The apòstel in Apòkalypse in tème con tàke' (944).³ The specific types of metrical variation in the first foot which iambic poets generally allowed themselves also occur: headless lines (lacking the initial unstressed syllable), as at 650 (quoted in the preceding sentence); lines beginning with a double dip (two unstressed syllables), as at 697 and 700; and lines with a reversed first foot (/x rather than x/), as at 542 and 543. One may also find the so-called 'epic caesura', where the third foot is reversed to place two stresses in a row in the middle of the line, with a slight pause for a syntactic break, grandeur and emphasis being often the result: 'That àll the lògh [body of water] lè mèd of lìght' (119).

The iambics will be for the most part perceptible to non-specialists, who will need to make only minor adjustments. Stress patterns in French-derived words, for instance, may be different in Middle English, as in 'And burnist white was her vestùre' (220). Final *-e* and final inflections such as *-ed* and *-es* should be pronounced where the metre requires: e.g. 'Her kyrtel of self sutë schene' (203); 'The day was all apassèd date' (540). Words such as 'never', 'ever', 'heaven' are often monosyllabic, as in 'That ever I herde of speche spent' (1132). *Sithen* [since], *other* [or] and *also* had monosyllabic counterparts for which there existed the variant forms *syn*, *or* and *als*, and these words we have therefore transcribed in whatever form the metre requires. We have also sometimes, *metri causa*, supplied a (historically justifiable) final *-e*, which does

occur in the manuscript spelling on some occasion(s), though not at that point.⁴

To those unfamiliar with Middle English pronunciation, the rhymes may occasionally *appear* imperfect. But in fact the poet does not ‘cheat’ or resort to pararhyme or half rhyme, though sound changes that have occurred since his time may sometimes obscure the truth of his rhymes to modern English ears – to which, however, the poem’s musicality should not in any other way prove inaudible.

MODE AND MEANING

The poem begins in allegorical mode: the little girl’s death and burial are referred to consistently as the dropping of a pearl into the ground in an arbour (9–10, 30, 41; cf. 245, 1172–3). This serves to transform the distressing facts into images of courtly beauty, both jewels and arbours connoting wealth and gentle status. To the girl are attributed aspects of typical courtly beauty; and to the mourning father the suffering typical of the lover languishing from the ‘wound’ received from Love’s arrow (11). In fact, a first-time reader might well at this point assume the death to be that of a mistress.

Loose parallels for the mode and subject can be found in Chaucer’s *Book of the Duchess*, which also, in dream-vision form, addresses the grief of one who mourns a feminine paragon, termed ‘White’ in punning reference to her Christian name of Blanche (Duchess of Lancaster and wife to John of Gaunt). ‘Pearl’ might similarly be an allusion to the girl’s real

name, Margaret or Margery (a Middle English synonym for 'pearl' used in the poem at 199, 206 and 1037). The two poems are obviously working in a broadly similar context of thought and literary form. The tropes introduced in the opening lines of *Pearl* (the harbour, the pearl, the courtly lady) are more than passing allusions. The narrator of the first section speaks as an expert jeweller when he says that he has weighed his pearl's value against that of other pearls; the verbs he uses in this context ('proved', 4, 'jugged', 7, 'set', 8) could all be used in a professional sense of the assay and evaluation of minerals. Later in the poem (252–300) he calls himself a 'jeweller' and is addressed as such by his beatified daughter. Perhaps this term had some literal applicability to the mourner in his waking life. The attention given in the four poems to the products of goldsmithery (rings, girdles, gold, silver, enamel, jewels, ecclesiastical and domestic vessels) certainly does seem more recurrent and less local than the informed and appreciative interest which this poet brings generally to all varieties of skill and craft.

The setting of the harbour gives way in the second section to the dazzling surroundings of heaven. Both landscapes are exercises in the description of the *locus amoenus* [fair place].⁵ By his juxtaposition of two variations on the topos, the *Pearl* poet produces a contrast between the earthly place and its divine counterpart. In the mortal harbour, the emphasis falls on one element only of the *locus amoenus*: the sweet-scented flowers, which the poem associates with the

cycles of growth and decay that characterize plant (and indeed all) life on earth (25–44). The heavenly *locus*, on the other hand, constructed of jewels, is associated with the brilliance and permanence of gems. And some features of the standard *locus amoenus* (such as birdsong and running water) are reserved for this second place, making it appear also as more refreshing and alive than the overpoweringly scented turf (57–8) of the first. The running water is given a climactic position in the description of the splendid landscape. It appears to be no sweetly purling brook such as is the *fiumicello* with its ‘tiny ripples’ that runs through Dante’s paradise (*Purgatorio* XXVIII.26, 35): it evidently has a swift current – cf. ‘scheres’ (107), ‘Swangeande’, ‘swepe’ (111), ‘raykande aryght’ (112) – and its vigorous motion complements the invigorating effect the place has on the dreamer, who is prompted to motion by it (101–2, 125–6). It provides, moreover, a climactic intensification of the bejewelled radiance of the landscape, a radiance now multiplied and refracted into a veritable ‘pool of light’ which elicits a cry of wonder from the dreamer as the refrain (on ‘adubbement’ [ornamentation]) is pushed into exclamatory mode: ‘Lord, dere was hit adubbement!’ (108).

A comparison with the *locus amoenus* in Dunbar’s *The Golden Targe* reveals what is traditional and what new in *Pearl*. *The Targe* shares with *Pearl* ‘resplendent’ rocks (44; cf. *Pe* 159), water whose stones appear as ‘clere as stern in frosty nycht’ (36; cf. *Pe* 115–16), and

which intensifies the dazzle (caused in Dunbar by the early-morning sun) so that ‘all the lake as lamp did leme of licht’ (30; cf. *Pe* 119). In Dunbar, too, a river provides the climax to a scene of what, in a series of similes and metaphors, are represented as ‘crystal’ beams, ‘beryl’ light, ‘pearly’ drops, ‘ruby’ dawn, ‘sapphire’ sky, etc. But, of course, in *Pearl* the jewels are real rather than figurative, and crystallize into actuality what would otherwise be the merely rhetorical: ‘crystal clyffes’ (74), tree-trunks ‘as blue as ble of ynde’ (76), leaves ‘as burnist sylver’ (77), riverbanks ‘As fildore fyne’ (106) could all be read as tropes of the kind found in *The Golden Targe* (and might well at first be read in exactly that way); but they demand to be taken more seriously when interspersed with unambiguous declarations that certain natural features *were* actually pearls or beryl (81–2, 110). Especially relevant are lines 113–18:

In the founs there stonden stones stepe,
 As glent thurgh glasse that glowed and glyght,
 As stremande sternes, when strothe-men slepe,
 Staren in welkyn in wynter night;
 For uch a pobbel in pole there pyght
 Was emerad, saffer, or gemme gent ...

We learn first that *stones* [pebbles] *stonden* [are situated or set] in the river-bed, appeared *stepe* [bright],⁶ and glittered like light refracted by glass and (as in Dunbar) like stars in a winter (i.e. frosty and clear) night. But the ensuing explanation (‘For’: 117) that each stone really was a precious gem gives added point to the similes and reveals a further potential meaning in the words *stonden* and *stones* in 113:

‘shine, stand out’⁷ and ‘*precious stones*’.

The main function of this landscape is to provide a setting in which the dreamer’s lost ‘pearl’ may most appropriately appear, and the third and fourth sections are about his vision of her. She materializes out of that part of the bejewelled landscape that is beyond the river and tormentingly perceptible but inaccessible to the dreamer (158–61). Shining white (163) in her resplendent setting (159), the colour of her array immediately suggests the lost ‘pearl’, as does the tense understatement (164) that she was not a complete stranger to the dreamer. The exact nature of the bereavement, however, is acknowledged to the audience (and even perhaps to the first-person speaker himself) only indirectly and gradually. The fact that his initial recognition leaves room for increasing degrees of certitude (167–8) is not immediately puzzling, given the factors of distance and dazzle; but those factors are complicated by a further ‘obscuring’ effect, for her form and appearance have undergone some transformation not at once as obvious to the audience, who do not yet know that the loved one the dreamer mourns was in fact a small child.

Significantly, his first references to her in his vision are (161–2) as ‘faunt’⁸ and ‘mayden’ (which in Middle English had the additional sense of ‘young girl, daughter’). The following portrait, however, suggests an older girl than the two-year-old she is later revealed to have been when she died, an imposing lady who both is and is not the dreamer’s lost infant. She is possessed of adult poise and magnificence, the

vocabulary of high courtliness, here and throughout, providing a means of expressing in human terms the girl's present divine and spiritual refinement and grace: she is of 'mensch' (of status and presence deserving of 'honour') and 'debonere' (162), possessed of a social graciousness that, in this poem, is the sign of heavenly grace. But that same high courtliness assimilates the identifying nouns *faunt* and *mayden* into some loose courtly sense of 'young lady' and obscures from the reader their specificity, in which lies both the past and present real essence of this *pearl*: for it is later made clear that it is actually the very fact of her death as a *faunt* and *mayden* that gives her the presently visible form and elegance bestowed on her *innocence* by God (765–8).

The girl's actions and the dramatic effects these have on the dreamer also suggest the close emotional bond that once connected the two (and in the case of the dreamer still does). The girl's few collected and understatedly decorous gestures – raising her face (177), rising (191), walking a few steps down to the opposite bank (230) and delivering a composed curtsy and formal greeting (236–8) – are all performed against a tumult of strong emotional and sense impressions on the part of the beholder, through whose report they appear to occur in almost painfully slow motion (the four brief and sequential movements occupying almost 100 lines). The use of the historic present for the most unremarkable of her actions ('veres', 177, 'Rises', 191) contributes to the sense of suspense that arises from the contrast between the

girl's undramatic actions and the dramatic responses of the dreamer:

The more I frayste her fayre face,
Her figure fyne when I had fonte,
Such gladande glory con to me glace
As little before thereto was wont.
To calle her lyst con me enchace,
Bot baysment gave myn hert a brunt:
I saw her in so strange a place,
Such a bur myght make myn herte blunt. (169–76)

The inventiveness of the poet's vocabulary is beautifully illustrated here: *gladande glory* is a concentrated expression that illustrates the important role played by present participles in the poet's style and involves a novel extension to the sense of the word *glory* which is without parallel, but whose emotional logic is instantly comprehensible. By contrast with the French-derived *glory*, Germanic vocabulary is, here as elsewhere (cf. 17–18), the medium for forceful images expressing strong emotions (*brunt*, *bur*, *blunt*; cf. *stonge* at 179). The verb *enchace* (173) in the sense of 'chase, pursue' was a French-derived hunting term that occurs only here used metaphorically with an abstract noun (*lyst*) as subject. The conflicting emotions of 173–4 – where the mourner is both 'chased' by desire towards, and sent reeling back by shock from, the same quarter – also involve innovative applications of the words *brunt* [assault], *bur* [impetus, blow] and *blunt* [dull, stupid] to metaphorical (emotional) 'shock'.

As she gets nearer to the dreamer, the girl comes into ever-clearer focus, and the generalizing phrase 'figure fyne' (170) leads into a highly detailed

description of her pearl-studded clothing. Her curtsy at last confirms (though only indirectly) the ‘daughter’ indicated by the dreamer’s statement that she was someone ‘nearer’ to him than aunt or niece (233): obeisance and bearing the head were gestures of the deference due to parents from well-bred children (though these courtesies of ‘wommon lore’ (236) are ones the girl could scarcely have been old enough to acquire while alive). But when the headwear politely removed by a child is a *crowne*, the implied inferiority is obviously under some question. The oddly incongruous gesture marks both what the relationship had been and the radically changed terms on which the two now meet.

This change becomes very apparent in the dialogue that follows. The girl’s very first words are a correction (her father has not chosen his words, his ‘tale’, quite accurately: 257) – a self-possessedly polite correction it would be unnerving to hear from one’s own child, and one which redefines the daughterly deference (the *Sir* and *ye*) with which it is delivered. The father’s apology only lands him in further trouble, for, as she points out, he has in the course of apologizing committed, through lack of consideration, three solecisms in one breath. Her logical and systematic exposition of these (‘Thou says ... An other ... The thrid’: 295–9) has an almost comically schoolmistressy air which underlines the complete reversal of roles, between instructor and instructed, that has occurred.

This reversal is made palpable in many different

ways, including forms of address and pronouns. Middle English had two singular pronouns of address: the informal *thou* and the formal *ye* (based on the plural form of address). The pearl maiden first addresses her father as *ye* (257), but soon moves to the unceremonious *thou* (264). When she does use *ye*, it is not the respectful singular, but an ordinary plural, as in ‘ye men’ (290), a dismissive usage that places him in a group she does not belong to. In these and other instances, *ye* stands in implicit or explicit (see 857–9) contrast with *we*, a pronoun the girl uses to group herself always with the blessed, never with her father. The father, on the other hand, uses the first-person plural pronoun to speak of the two of them;⁹ and he responds to his daughter’s rebukes like a humbled child, his respectful *ye* and *your* (371, 369) complementing the parental downward *thou* which his daughter uses when addressing herself to the wayward distress of her father. Only when his own human sense of justice is offended (by the queen’s status she claims for herself in heaven) does he briefly revert to the *thou* forms (473–4), which reflect his instinct to bring his daughter down from what he feels is a ‘height’ she has no claim to.

Reversal of the roles of child and parent is also apparent in the expression of emotional needs. In railing against his misfortune, the father understandably looks for her sympathy, but the girl, now integrated into a heavenly bliss which leaves her untouched and untouchable by human pain, has none to give, seeing in his distress only perverse blindness

to the essential sources of true bliss and pointless opposition to the will of God. For the poem is not entirely consolatory in effect or purpose. Christian faith in an afterlife does not make bereavement any easier to bear, for it becomes clear to the father that, if his daughter lives on, she lives on in a form so different as to make no less absolute the loss of the child he knew, who really is gone for ever, and with whom he can never re-establish the relationship he once had. In fact, when he learns from his daughter that he cannot cross the river to join her, he delivers, against the felt hollowness of the Christian promise, its failure to reunite the bereaved with his lost one, a passionate outcry which is utterly persuasive in emotional terms and gains much of its plangent force from the connections and oppositions that the alliteration points up:

‘Demes thou me,’ quoth I, ‘my swete,
To doel agayn, then I dewyne.
Now have I founde that I forlete,
Schal I eft forgo hit ere ever I fyne?
Why schal I hit both mysse and mete?
My precious perle dos me gret pine:
What serves tresor bot gares men grete,
When he hit schal eft with tenes tyne? ...
When I am partles of perles myne,
Bot durande doel what may men deme?’ (325–36)

The assurance of a life preserved and transformed beyond death which has been staged and visualized by the poem is found here simply to condemn or *deme* the mourner to the same *doel* [grief] in which to *dewyne* [languish] again (cf. 51, 11) that it had seemed to rescue him from (280). The alliterative antitheses *founde/forlete* (327) and *mysse/mete* (329)

focus on the cruel delusion felt in an assurance which appears to restore what it in fact continues to withhold; and other-worldly life and language seem merely to mock the jeweller with the literal truth they turn out not to have: he is *not* to recover the pearl of whose preservation he had apparently been assured (257–8), and a jeweller dispossessed of jewels – *partles of perles* (335) – is necessarily condemned to *durande doel* (336).

The girl does have some limited success in getting her father to see things differently. Her arguments in section VI – for acceptance of what cannot be changed, and trust in the promises and mercy of the Christian God – were both available to the mourner prior to his vision, and he was not unaware of them, but had confessed himself unable to heed them (52–6); they now, however, gain a personalized force, when imagined as uttered in vigorous scorn by his own daughter, that makes them less unacceptable to a deeply personal loss than the depersonalized and depersonalizing wisdom of general *dicta*. Not wanting to embitter his relations with his child, the father attempts in section VII to re-establish communications on a more harmonious footing by changing to a non-contentious subject: he feels it would be some consolation to be able to picture how her days are spent (390–92) and reminds himself that his chief concern as a parent is (or ought to be), not for proximity, but for the welfare and honour of his child, which, in the present case, patently provide him with something to be happy about (393–6). But, far from

establishing a safe common ground, her replies to these questions give rise to further contention and misunderstanding. Thus he finds it hard to accept her claim that she has become a 'queen' in heaven. The mourner had himself attributed 'peerlessness' and *synglerty* to his lost pearl (4, 8); but he had been speaking of her irreplaceability in a personal relationship and is surprised to find that God had found her singular enough to raise her to what he takes to be the singular honour of the status of 'queen' of heaven – especially since that was, by convention, the title of the Virgin Mary, whose claims to *synglerty* (429), based as they were on giving birth to God and being simultaneously virgin and mother, seemed to rest so completely secure from challenge. But his mortal terms of reference turn out to be inappropriate to heaven, where personal relationships and *synglerty* have no place: his daughter is now part of a corporate body (457–68), and shares in a common sovereign status (447–8).

The dreamer's failure to understand the logic of heaven, here and at other points, is designed, not to expose his 'errors' (as is sometimes assumed), but to create of heaven a realm that really does prove inaccessible to human reason. In earthly terms, the title of king or queen, and the distinction it implies, become meaningless if the title is common to all. It also makes no sense in the same earthly terms that the girl should have gained the reward of queenship after only two years of service in the world, for that would mean that length of distinguished service cannot be

recognized by any correlative distinction of status – which is plainly unfair.

To ‘solve’ this particular problem, the daughter retells the Parable of the Vineyard (Matthew 20) in sections IX and X. But the moral of this story (in which those who labour for less time both get paid the same wage as those who worked longer and get paid first) is notoriously difficult, and the expression which has passed into common speech (translated at 554), ‘(those who) have borne the heat and burden of the day’, is normally used in such a way as to suggest an instinctive sympathy for the position taken up by the complainants. The poet’s own realistically visualized version does nothing to make the story’s logic more palatable, and the overall effect of the parable in *Pearl* is therefore to sharpen the sense of some basic incompatibility between human and divine criteria of justice and reason.

The girl, after a long response to her father’s continued objections, introduces more briefly another parable from St Matthew’s Gospel: that of the ‘pearl of great price’ (Matthew 13:45–6), where the pearl for which the merchant sold all his goods represents salvation in heaven. The accretive complexity of the image of the pearl becomes particularly evident at this point. The girl, herself identified as a peerless and spotless pearl, cites a biblical parable in which the pearl stands for the ‘reme [realm] of hevens clere’ (735), pointing simultaneously to the particularly fine pearl she wears on her breast. The figurative and literal ‘pearls’ seem in fact to merge in spite of logical

distinctions:

‘This makeles perle, that boght is dere,
The jueler gave for all his god,
Is like the reme of hevens clere
(So sayd the Fader of folde and flod):
For hit is wemles, clene and clere,
And endeles rounde, and blythe of mod,
And commune to all that ryghtwys were.
Lo, even in-myddes my brest hit stode ...’ (733–40)

The biblical simile is here developed by the addition of other attributes (besides value) shared by a matchless pearl and the kingdom of heaven. Perfection, flawlessness and circular infinitude (737–8) are logical enough; but *blythe of mod* and common possession by all who lived worthy lives (738–9) are not attributes of a pearl, and become so only when the pearl set on the girl’s breast is pointed to (740) as if it were the *makeles perle* of the parable (733) given visible reality: it now clearly betokens the bliss inherited by her purity of heart or *mod* and is thus (as is later confirmed: 1103–4) the *commune* possession of all the brides of the Lamb.

These lines herald a change. The father has now not spoken for some 150 lines (601–744). His earlier ‘argument’ with her – characterized on both sides by the exchange of textual authorities (especially scriptural ones) – is reminiscent of Middle English debate verse (which was in turn modelled on academic debate). However, the debate turns out to have been, not the horizontal one found in such poems as *The Owl and the Nightingale* or *Winner and Waster* (where there is no *a priori* inequality in the credibility of the disputants), but a vertical one, in

which one of the disputants (here, the erring mortal) is, however persuasive, by definition wrong if he contradicts the other (a beatified soul with perfect understanding: 859). When the father speaks again at 745 it is not to press or even to concede the point he had been arguing, but to ask a wondering question that suggests he is in some sense seeing the girl for the first time, and which introduces a new mood (of marvelling, rather than resistant, incomprehension). This in turn prompts a modulation in mode – as the dialogue is resumed, not now in the mode of a debate, but in the question-and-answer form (found in such medieval texts as *Sidrak and Bokkus* or *Dives and Pauper*) that implies the unquestioned acceptance of the authority of the answerer. The question he puts to her (who is the author of your visible form and being?) is something a father could in no other context ask of his daughter, and here measures the distance he now senses between himself and his erstwhile child.

The change in his understanding is further suggested in other ways. For example, on its first appearance, the account had introduced the crown as something which the girl, no less than all the saved, enjoyed (447–8); but as the poem starts to direct itself towards the apocalyptic vision of heaven, she is introduced as one of the 144,000 brides of the Lamb in Revelation (785–7) and the crown as one of the attributes (virginity: 767) that qualifies her for inclusion in that divine élite. The two exegeses are not, strictly, absolutely compatible with one another,

belonging rather to phases of the developing awareness of the child's status in heaven: the first establishes her as qualifying for no *less* than others, despite her youth; the second corresponds to her emphasis (625–72) on the in fact *superior* claims of innocence over righteousness.

But the now humbler father finds her status as 'bride' of the Christ-Lamb no less problematic than he had her rank as 'queen' of heaven. The more corporate and less individual emphasis in the divine realm again proves resistant to mortal comprehension (for in the known world a crown and a wife imply singularity and superiority or selection over others). He therefore assumes she has 'beaten' a number of rival claimants: 'stout and stif', she managed to 'depres' [subjugate, overthrow, drive out] them all (777–80). The limitations and yet the inevitability of a 'human' perspective on the divine are implicitly recognized in the touching comedy of these words which cast the girl as a kind of Brünnhilde – whose triumphs are recorded with an audible touch of paternal pride by a father obviously not displeased at the idea of his little girl having sturdily elbowed aside all the opposition to land herself the most eligible bachelor in the cosmos. His desire to know why the Lamb chose her is one of a series of questions in which interest in the deity and the afterlife can emerge only out of an interest more specifically directed towards the lost daughter: what life does she lead (390–92), who made her and who is her consort (747, 771), what accommodation is provided for her and her fellow brides (925ff)? And

his request to be shown the heavenly city of the New Jerusalem is one with a desire to view ‘*thy blysfyl bour*’ (964).

This last request to his daughter, that she might lead him to see her dwelling place, is thus like and unlike his first (389–92): it marks the culmination of a process in which his interest in the girl’s present state has led him from her to her wider context, to the Lamb (769ff) and now to heaven itself. For the girl partially succeeds in imposing the perspective she urges on her father: his interest should be, not in her, but in the glorious whole of which she is a part, a whole in which individual identity is subsumed. In a mark of that success, the poem now replays itself to produce a parallel to the earlier climactic vision of her, across the river that divides the mortal from the immortal realm, in a second vision, in which she is replaced by the heavenly city, which now is similarly seen across the river, having replaced her as the focus of the dreamer’s present preoccupation. The text now returns to the mode of visual description in a way that makes the culmination of this dream-vision a fusion of actual with intellectual ‘seeing’: in his closing vision of the heavenly city, which draws heavily and self-consciously on the Book of Revelation, the father sees his pearl, in an affirmation of the corporate nature of identity in heaven, in a group of 144,000 brides, all in identical attire, and all having eyes only for the Lamb.

But this God-centred perspective, the heavenly ‘view’ of things in which all individuality is sunk in a corporate charity (cf. 445–68), he can enjoy only

briefly: with the unerring eye of a parent, he picks out from the crowd of queens ‘*my little quene*’ (1147) – and this fatally alters the perspective from divine to mortal and precipitates the end of the dream. The dreamer remains to the end a human, subject to mortal priorities and impulses, and – compared with St John’s Apocalypse – his vision of heaven is accordingly limited. His sight is a qualified knowledge only, not a complete ‘Revelation’: it is *only* sight, not entrance (966–8), sight that is brief and aborted, and, as the girl warns him, from the ‘outside’ only, not from the inside (969–70). Awareness of the strictly limited comprehension of the next world that can be gained by a mortal understanding is therefore a feature of the text that persists even into its culminating ‘vision’.

Recommended Further Reading: Kean 1967; Bishop 1968; Spearing 1970; Mann 1983; Aers 1993; Putter 1996: 147–98; Newman 2007; Gaylord 2009

Pearl

I

- Perle, plesaunt to princes pay
To clanly close in gold so clere –
Out of orient, I hardily say,
Ne proved I never her precious pere:
5 So rounde, so reken in uch aray,
So smal, so smothe her sides were,
Wheresoever I jugged gemmes gay,
I set her sengeley in synglere.
Alas, I lest her in an erbere:
10 Thurgh gresse to grounde hit fro me yot.
I dewyne, fordolked of luf-daungere
Of that privy perle withouten spot.
- Syn in that spot hit fro me sprang,
Oft have I wayted, wyschande that wele,
15 That wont was while devoyde my wrang
And heven my hap and all my hele;
That dos bot thrych my herte thrange,
My brest in bale bot bolne and bele.
Yet thought me never so swete a sange
20 As stille stounde let to me stele;
For sothe there fleten to me fele,
To thenk her colour so clad in clot:

O **moul**, thou marres a **mery juele**,
My privy perle withouten spot.

- 25 That spot of spyces **mot nedes sprede**
There such **rychess** to rot is runne.
Blomes blayke and blue and **rede**
There schines ful **schyr** agayns the **sunne**.
Flour and fruyt may not be fede
- 30 There hit **doun drof** in moldes **dunne**.
For uch gresse mot grow of graynes **dede**:
No **whete** were elles to wones wonne.
Of good uch good is **aye** begonne:
So **semely** a **sede** myght **fayle** not
- 35 That spryngande spyces up ne sponne
Of that **precious** perle withouten spot.

- To that spot that I in **speche expoun**
I entred in that erber **grene**,
In **Auguste** in a high sesoun,
- 40 When corne is **corven** with **crokes kene**.
On huyle there perle hit trendeled doun
Schadowed **these** wortes ful schyre and
schene,
Gilofre, **gyngure** and **gromyloun**,
And **pyonys powdered** aye bitwene.
- 45 If hit was semely on to sene,
A fayr **reflayr** yet fro hit **flot**.
There **wones** that worthly, I wot and **wene**,
My precious perle withouten spot.

- Before that spot my **hande** I **spenned**,
- 50 For **care** ful colde that to me caght.

A devely **doel** in my hert denned:
Thagh resoun set myselven **saght**,
I playned my perle that there was **penned**
With **fyrce** skylles that faste **faght**;
55 **Thagh kynde** of Cryst me **comfort** kenned,
My **wreched** wille in **wo** aye **wraghte**.
I **fel** upon that **floury** flaght,
Such odour to my hernes schot;
I **slode** upon a **slepyng** slaght
60 On that precious perle withouten spot.

II

Fro spot my **spyryt** there sprang in space;
My **body** on balke there bode in **sweven**;
My **gost** is gon in **Godes** grace
In **aventure** there mervayles meven.
65 I ne **wyst** in **this** world where that hit was,
Bot I knew me cast there clyffes cleven.
Toward a forest I bere the face,
Where rokkes **rich** were to **discreven**:
The **lyght** of **hem** myght no **man leven**,
70 The **glemande** glory that of hem **glent**;
For were never **webbes** that wyes **weven**
Of **half** so dere **adubement**.

Dubbed were all **tho** downes sides
With crystal clyffes **so** clere of kynde;
75 **Holtwodes bryght aboute** hem bides,
Of boles as blue as **ble** of **ynde**;
As **burnist sylver** the **lef** on slydes,
That thik **con** trylle on uch a tynde:
When **glem** of glodes **agayns** hem glydes,

80 With **schymeryng schene** ful **schrylle** thay
schinde;

The **gravayl** that on **grounde** con **grynde**
Were precious perles of orient: –
The **sunnebemes** bot **blo** and **bynde**
In **respecte** of that adubblement.

85 The adubblement of tho downes dere
Garten my gost all **gref forgete**.

So **fresche flavores** of fruytes were,
As **fode** hit con me fayr **refete**.

Fowles there **flowen** in **frith** in fere,

90 Of **flaumbande** hues, **both smal** and grete;
Bot sytole **stryng** and gyternere

Her reken mirthe myght not retrete;

For when those **bryddes** her wynges bete,
Thay **songen** with a swete **asent**;

95 So **gracious gle couth** no man **gete**
As here and see her adubblement.

So all was dubbed on dere **assyse**

That frith there **fortune forth** me **feres**:

The derthe **thereof** for to devise

100 Nis no **wye** worthy that **tonge** beres.

I **welke** aye forth in **wely wyse**:

No bonk so big that did me **deres**;

The ferre in the frith, the fayrer con rise

The **playn**, the **plonttes**, the **spyce**, the peres, –

105 And rawes and randes and rich reveres,
As **fildore** fyne her bonkes brent.

I **wan to** a water by **schore** that scheres:
Lord, dere was hit adubblement!

The dubbement of tho derworth depe
110 Were bonkes bene of beryl bryght.
Swangeande swete the water con swepe,
With a rounande rurd raykande aryght.
In the founs there stonden stones stepe,
As glent thurgh glasse that glowed and glyght,
115 As stremande sternes, when strothe-men slepe,
Staren in welkyn in wynter night;
For uch a pobbel in pole there pyght
Was emerad, saffer, or gemme gent,
That all the logh lemed of lyght,
120 So dere was hit adubbement.

III

The dubbement dere of down and dales,
Of wode and water and wlonke playnes,
Bylde in me blisse, abated my bales,
Fordidden my stresse, disstryed my paynes.
125 Doun after a strem that dryly haies
I bowed in blisse, bredful my braynes.
The ferre I folwed those floty vales,
The more strenthe of joy myn herte straynes, –
As Fortune fares thereas ho fraynes:
130 Whether solace ho sende or elles sore,
The wye to whom her wille ho waynes
Hittes to have aye more and more.

More of wele was in that wyse
Then I couth telle, thagh I tom hade:
135 For urthely hert myght not suffyse
To the tenthe dole of tho gladnes glade.
Forthy I thought that Paradise

- Was there over **gayn** tho bonkes **brade**.
I hoped the water were a **devise**
- 140 **Bitwene** mirthes **by** meres made;
Biyonde that **brok**, by slente or **slade**,
I hoped that mote merked **wore**;
Bot the water was **depe** – I **durst** not **wade**,
And ever me **longed** aye more and **more**.
- 145 More and more, and yet wel **mare**,
Me lyst to see the brok biyonde:
For if hit was fayr there I con fare,
Wel loveloker was the ferre **londe**.
About me con I **stote** and stare;
- 150 To fynde a **forde** fast con I **fonde**;
Bot wothes **mo**, **iwyssse**, there **ware**,
The ferre I **stalked** by the **stronde**;
And ever me **thoght** I schuld not **wonde**
For wo, there weles so **wynne** wore.
- 155 **Then newe note** me com on **honde**
That meved my **mynde** aye more and more.

- More **mervayl** con my dome adaunt:
I saw biyonde that mery **mere**
A crystal **clyff** ful **relusaunt**;
- 160 **Mony** ryal **ray** con fro hit **rere**;
At the fote thereof there sat a faunt,
A **mayden** of mensk, ful **debonere**;
Blysnande white was her bleaunt.
I knew her **wel**: I had sene her ere.
- 165 As **glysnande** gold that man con schere,
So schon that schene **anunder** schore.
On lenghe I loked to her there:

The lenger, I knew her more and more.

- The more I frayste her fayre face,
170 Her **figure fyne** when I had **fonte**,
Such gladande **glory** con to me **glace**
As little before thereto was wont.
To **calle** her **lyst** con me **enchace**,
Bot **baysment** gave myn hert a brunt:
175 I saw her in so strange a **place**,
Such a bur myght make myn herte **blunt**.
Then **veres** ho up her fayre **frount**,
Her **visage** white as **playn yvore**.
That **stonge** myn hert ful **stray atount**, –
180 And ever the lenger, the more and more.

IV

- More then me lyst my **drede aros**;
I **stod** ful **stille** and durst not calle;
With iyen open and mouth ful **clos**,
I stod as hende as **hawk** in **halle**;
185 I hoped that **gostly** was that purpose;
I dred anende **what schuld befall**e,
Lest ho me eschaped that I there chos
Ere I at steven her myght **stalle**.
That gracious gay withouten **galle**,
190 So smothe, so smal, so seme slyght,
Rises up in her aray ryalle,
A precious pece in perles pyght.

- Perles pyght of **ryal pris**
There myght man by grace have sene,
195 When that fresch as **flor-de-lys**

- Doun the bonk con **bow bydene**:
All blysnande white was her **beau mys**,
Open at sides, and **bounden bene**
With the meriest margarys at my devise
200 That ever I saw yet with myn ene,
With lappes large, I wot and wene,
Dubbed with **double** perle and dight,
Her **kyrtel** of **self sute** schene
With precious perles all **umbe pyght**.
- 205 A pyght **coroune** yet wer that **gyrle**
Of margarys and non other stone,
High pinacled of clere white perle,
With **flurted** flowres perfet upon;
To hed had ho non other werle.
- 210 **Her lere** hit leke, all her **umbe-gon**,
Her **semblaunt sad for duk or erle**,
Her ble more blaght then whalles **bon**.
As schorne gold schyr her **fax** then schon,
On schulderes that **lay unlapped lyght**;
- 215 Her depe colour yet wonted non
Of precious perles in **porfyl** pyght.

- Pyght was poyned and uch a hemme –
At hande, at sides, at **overture** –
With white perle and non other gemme,
220 And burnist white was her **vesture**.
Bot a **wonder** perle withouten **wemme**
In-myddes her brest was set so sure;
A **manes** dome myght dryly **demme**
Ere mynde myght malt in hit mesure;
225 I **hope** no tonge myght **endure**

No **saverly sawe** say of that **sight**,
So was hit clene and clere and pure,
That precious perle, there hit was pyght.

- Pyght in perle, that precious pece
230 On **wyther-half** water com down the schore;
No gladder **gome hethen** into Grece
Then I, when ho on **brymme** wore;
Ho was me **nerre** then aunt or **nece**:
My joy forthy was **much** the more.
235 Ho profered me speche, that **special** spyce,
Enclynande lowe in **wommon** lore:
Caght of her crowne of **grete** tresore,
And haylsed me with a **lote** lyght.
Wel was me that ever I was **bore**
240 To **sware** that swete in perles pyght!

V

- ‘O, perle,’ **quoth** I, ‘in perles pyght,
Art thou my perle that I have playned,
Regretted by myn one on night?
Much **longing** have I for thee layned
245 Syn into gresse thou me **aglyghte**.
Pensyf, payred, I am **forpayned**, –
And thou in a lif of **lykyng** lyght,
In Paradise erde, of stryf **unstrayned**.
What **wyrde** has **hider** my juel wayned
250 And **done** me in this doel and gret **daunger**?
Fro we in **twynne** were **towen** and **twayned**,
I have ben a **joyles jueler**.’

That juel then, in gemmes gent,

Vered up her **vys** with iyen gray,
255 Set on her crowne of perle orient,
And **soberly** after then con ho say:
'Sir, ye **haf** your tale **mysetente**,
To say your perle is all away,
That is in cofer so **comly clente**
260 As in this garden gracious gay,
Hereinne to **leng** for ever and **play**,
There **mysse** ne **mournyng** com never here:
Here were a **forser** for thee, in **fay**,
If thou were a gentyl jueler.

265 'Bot, jueler **gent**, if thou schal **lose**
Thy joy for a gemme that thee was **lef**,
Me think thee put in a **mad** purpose
And busyes thee aboute a resoun bref:
For that thou lestes was bot a rose,
270 That **flowred** and fayled as kynde hit gef.
Now, thurgh kynde of the **kyst** that hit con
close,
To a perle of pris hit is put in **pref**, –
And thou has called thy wyrde a **thef**
That **oght** of **noght** has made thee **cler**;
275 Thou blames the **bote** of thy **meschef**:
Thou art no kynde jueler.'

A juel to me then was this gest,
And jueles were her gentyl sawes.
'Iwysse,' quoth I, 'my blysfyl best,
280 My gret **distresse** thou all **to-drawes**.
To be excused I make **requeste**:
I trowed my perle done out of **dawes**;

Now have I founde hit, I schal ma fest,
And wone with hit in schyr **wodschawes**,
285 And **love** my Lord and all his lawes,
That has me **brought** this blisse ner.
Now were I at yow biyonde these **wawes**,
I were a joyful jueler.'

'Jueler,' sayd that gemme clene,
290 'Why **bourde ye** men? So mad ye **be**.
Thre wordes has thou spoken at **ene**:
Unavysed for sothe were all thre;
Thou ne **wost** in world what **one** dos **mene**;
Thy word before thy wyt con fle.
295 Thou says thou trowes me in this **dene**,
Bicause thou may with iyen me see;
An other, thou says in this **countre**
Thyself schal wone with me right here;
The **thrid**, to passe this water fre, –
300 That may no joyful jueler.

VI

'I holde that jueler little to **prayse**
That loues wel that he saw with **ieye**,
And much to **blame** and **uncortayse**
That leves our Lord **wolde** make a **lye**,
305 That **lelly** hyght your lif to **rayse**,
Thagh fortune did your **flesch** to **die**.
Ye setten His wordes ful westernays
That loues no thing bot ye hit **syne**.
And that is a poynt of sorquydrye,
310 That uch **good** man may evel **biseme**,
To leve no tale be true to **trye**

Bot that his one skylle may **deme**.

‘Deme now thyself if thou con **dayle**

As man to God wordes schuld heve:

315 Thou says thou schal wone in this **bayle**:

Me think thee burde first **ask leve**,

And yet of **graunt** thou myghtes fayle.

Thou **wilnes** over this water to **weve**:

Ere most thou kever to other counsayle;

320 Thy corse in clot mot colder **keve**;

For hit was **forgart** at Paradise **greve**;

Our **yore** fader hit con **mysse-yeme**.

Thurgh **drury deth bos** uch man **dreve**

Ere over this **dam** him **Dryhtyn** deme.’

325 ‘Demes thou me,’ quoth I, ‘my swete,

To doel **agayn**, then I dewyne.

Now have I founde that I **forlete**,

Schal I **eft forgo** hit ere ever I **fyne**?

Why schal I hit both **mysse** and mete?

330 My precious perle dos me gret **pine**:

What serves tresor bot gares men **grete**,

When he hit schal eft with tenes **tyne**?

Now **rech** I never for to **declyne**,

Ne how **fer** of folde that man me fleme:

335 When I am **partles** of perles myne,

Bot durande doel what may men deme?’

‘Thou demes noght bot **doel-distresse**,’

Then sayd that **wyght**. ‘Why **dos** thou so?’

For **dyn** of doel of lures lesse,

340 Oft mony man forgos the mo.

- Thee oghte better **thyselven blesse**,
 And **love** aye God in wele and wo,
 For **anger** gaynes thee not a cresse.
 Who nedes schal **thole**, be not so **thro**.
 345 For **thogh** thou **daunce** as any **do**,
Braundysch and **bray** thy brathes **breme**,
 When thou no ferre may, to ne fro,
 Thou most **abide** that He schal deme.

 ‘Deme Dryhtyn, ever Him adyte, –
 350 Of the **way** a fote ne wil He **wrythe**;
 Thy **mendes** mountes not a **myte**,
 Thagh thou for **sorw** be never **blythe**.
 Stynt of thy **strot** and fyne to **flyte**,
 And sech His **blythe** ful **swyft** and swythe, –
 355 Thy **prayer** may His **pyty** bite,
 That mercy schal her craftes **kythe**;
 His comfort may thy **langour lythe**,
 And thy lures of lyghtly leme.
 For, marre or **madde**, mourne and **mythe**,
 360 All lys in Him to **dight** and deme.’

VII

- Then demed I to that **damyselle**:
 ‘Ne worthe no **wrath** unto my Lorde,
 If rapely I rave, spornande in **spelle**:
 My hert was all with mysse remorde,
 365 As wallande water gos out of **welle**.
 I do me aye in His **myserecorde**.
 Rebuke me never with wordes felle,
 Thagh I forloyne, my dere endorde,
 Bot kythes me **kyndly** your **coumforde**,

370 **Pitously** thenkande upon this:
Of care and me ye made acorde,
That ere was grounde of all my blisse.

‘My blisse, my bale, ye haf ben bothe,
Bot much the bigger yet was my mone:
375 Fro thou was **wroken** fro uch a wothe,
I wyst never where my perle was gon;
Now I hit see, now lethes my **lothe**.
And when we departed, we were at one;
God **forbede** we be now wrothe,
380 We **meten** so **selden** by **stok** or **stone**.
Thagh **cortaysly** ye **carpe** con,
I am bot **mul**, and maneres mysse:
Bot Crystes mercy, and Mary and John,
These are the grounde of all my blisse.

385 ‘In blisse I see thee blythely **blent**,
And I a man all **mornyf mate**:
Ye take thereon ful little tente,
Thagh I hent **ofte** harmes **hate**.
Bot now I am here in your **present**,
390 I wolde **beseche**, withoute **debate**,
Ye wolde me say, in **sobre** asent,
What lif ye leden, erly and **late**;
For I am ful **fayn** that your **astate**
Is worthen to **worschip** and wele, iwysse:
395 Of all my joy the highe gate,
It is in grounde of all my blisse.’

‘Now blisse, **burn**, mot thee **bityde**,’
Then sayd that **lufsum** of **lyth** and lere,

‘And welcom here to walk and bide,
400 For now thy speche is to me dere.
Maysterful mod and high pryde,
I hete thee, are heterly hated here;
My Lord ne loves not for to chyde,
For meke are all that wones Him nere;
405 And when in His place thou schal apere,
Be depe devout in hole mekenisse.
My Lord the Lamb loves aye such chere,
That is the grounde of all my blisse.

‘A blysful lif thou says I lede:
410 Thou woldes know thereof the stage.
Thou wost wel, when thy perle con schede,
I was ful yong and tender of age;
Bot my Lord the Lamb, thurgh His godhede,
He toke myself to His maryage,
415 Corounde me quene in blisse to brede,
In lenghe of dayes that ever schal wage,
And sesed in all His heritage
His lef is. I am holly His:
His prese, His pris, and His parage
420 Is rote and grounde of all my blisse.’

VIII

‘Blysful,’ quoth I, ‘may this be true?
Displeases not if I speke errour.
Art thou the quene of hevens blue
That all this world schal do honour?
425 We leven on Mary, that grace of grewe,
That bere a barn of vyrgyn flour;
The crowne fro her who myght remue,

Bot ho her passed in **sum** favour?
Now, for **synglerty** of her dousour,
430 We calle her Fenyx of Arraby,
That freles **flewe** of her **Fasor**,
Like to the quene of **courtaysye**.'

'**Cortays** quene,' then sayd that gay,
Knelande to grounde, folde up her face,
435 'Makeles **moder** and merriest **may**,
Blessed **begynner** of uch a grace!
Then **ros** ho up and con **restay**,
And speke me toward in that space:
'**Sir**, fele here porchases and **fonges pray**,
440 Bot supplantores none within this place:
That **emperise** all hevens has,
And **erthe** and **helle**, in her bayly;
Of heritage yet none wil ho **chace**,
For ho is quene of courtaysye.

445 'The court of the **kyndom** of God alyve
Has a **property** in **hithself** beyng:
Alle that may **therein** aryve
Of all the **reme** is quene or **kyng**,
And never other yet schal **depryve**,
450 Bot **uchone** fayn of otheres **hafyng**,
And wolde her crownes were worth tho **fyve**,
If possyble were her **mendyng**.
Bot my **lady**, of whom Jesu con **spryng**,
Ho **holdes** the empire over us ful high,
455 And that **displeases** none of our **gyng**,
For ho is quene of courtaysye.

‘Of courtaysye, as says **Saynt Poule**,
 All are we membres of Jesu Cryst:
 As **hed** and **arme** and **legg** and **naule**
 460 Temen to his body ful true and tryste,
 Right so is uch a **Krystyin saule**
 A **longande lym** to the Mayster of **myste**.
 Then loke what **hate** or any **gawle**
 Is tached or **tyed** thy lymmes **bytwyste**:
 465 Thy hed has nauther **greme** ne **gryste**,
 On arme or finger thagh thou bere **bye**:
 So fare we all with **luf** and lyst
 To kyng and quene, by courtaysye.’

‘Courtaysye,’ quoth I, ‘I leve,
 470 And **charyte** gret be yow among;
 Bot, my speche that yow ne greve,

 Thyself in heven over high thou heve,
 To make thee quene that was so yong.
 475 What more **honour** myght he **acheve**
 That had endured in worlde strong,
 And **lyved** in **penaunce** his **lyves long**,
 With **bodyly** bale him blisse to **bye**?
 What more worschip myght he fonge
 480 Then corounde be kyng by courtaysye?

IX

‘That courtaysye is to fre of dede,
 If hit be **soth** that thou cones say.
 Thou lyved not two yere in our **thede**;
 Thou couthes never God nauther **plese** ne
 pray,

485 Ne never nauther **Pater** ne **Crede**:
And quene made on the **firste day**! –
I may not **throw**, so God me spede,
That God wolde wrythe so **wrong** away.
Of countes, damysel, par ma fay,
490 Were fayr in heven to holde astate,
Or elles a lady of **lesse** array; –
Bot a quene! Hit is to dere a **date**.’

‘There is no date of His godness,’
Then sayd to me that worthy wyght,
495 ‘For all is **trauthe** that He con **dresse**,
And He may **do** no thing bot **right**.
As Mathew meles in your Messe,
In **sothfol** Gospel of God **Almyght**,
In **sample** He con ful graythly gesse,
500 And lyknes hit to heven **lyght**:
“My **regne**,” He says, “is like on **hyght**
To a lord that had a **vyne**, I **wate**”;
Of **tyme** of **yere** the **terme** was tyght:
To labor vyne was dere the date.

505 ‘That date of yere wel **knowe** these hyne.
The lord ful **erly** up he ros
To **hyre werkmen** to his vyne,
And fyndes there summe to his purpose.
Into **acorde** thay con declyne
510 For a **peny** on a day, and forth thay gos,
Wrythen and worken and don gret pine,
Kerven and **caggen** and man hit clos.
Aboute under, the lord to marked **tos**,
And **ydel** men stande he fyndes thereat.

515 “Why stand ye ydel?” he sayd to those,
“Ne knowe ye of this day no date?”

‘ “Ere date of day hider are we wonne,”
So was all samen her **answar** soght,
“We haf standen here syn ros the sunne,
520 And no man biddes us do right nought.”
“Gos into my vyne, dos that ye **conne**,”
So sayd the lord, and made hit **toght**:
“What **resounable hyre** by night be **runne**
I yow pay, in dede and thoght.”
525 Thay **went** into the vyne and wrought. –
And all day the lord thus **yede** his **gate**,
And new men to his vyne he broght,
Wel negh while day was passed date.

‘At the date of day of **evensong**,
530 On **houre before** the sunne go down,
He saw there ydel men ful **strong**,
And sayd to hem with sobre soun,
“Why stand ye ydel this dayes long?”
Thay sayden her hyre was nowhere **boun**.
535 “Gos to my vyne, **yemen** yong,
And workes and dos that that ye **moun**.”
Sone the **world** becom wel **broun**;
The sunne was down and hit wex late.
To take her hyre he made **sumoun**:
540 The day was all **apassed** date.

X

‘The date of the day the lord con know;
Called to the **reve**: “Lede, pay the **meyny**:

Gif hem the hyre that I hem owe;
And ferre, that non me may reprene,
545 Set hem all upon a rowe,
And gif uchone inlyche a peny;
Begyn at the last that standes lowe,
Til to the first that thou atteny.”
And then the first begonne to pleny,
550 And sayden that thay had travayled sore:
“These bot on houre hem con streny;
Us think us oghe to take more.

‘ “More haf we served, us think so,
That suffred haf the dayes hete,
555 Then these that wrought not houres two, –
And thou dos hem us to counterfete.”
Then sayd the lord to one of tho:
“Frende, no waning I wil thee yete;
Take that is thyn owne and go.
560 And I hyred thee for a peny agrete,
Why begynnes thou now to threte?
Was not a peny thy covenaut thore?
Ferre then covenaut is not to plete:
Why schalt thou then aske more?

565 ‘ “More, whether loulyly is me my gift,
To do with myne whatso me likes?
Or elles thyn iye to luther is lyfte
For I am good and non byswykes?”
“Thus schal I,” quoth Cryst, “hit skyfte:
570 The last schal be the first that strikes,
And the first the last, be he never so swyft;
For many ben called, thagh few be mykes.”

Thus pore men her part aye pikes,
Thogh thay com late and little wore;
575 And thagh her sweng with little atslykes,
The mercy of God is much the more.

‘More have I of joy and blisse hereinne,
Of ladyschyp gret and lyves blom,
Then all the wyes in the world myght wynne,
580 By the way of right to aske dome.
Whether wel negh now I con begynne –
In eventide into the vyne I com –
First of my hyre my lord con mynne:
I was payed anon of all and sum;
585 Yet other there were that toke more tom,
That swange and swat for longe yore,
That yet of hyre no thing thay nome,
Peraunter nocht schal to-yere more.’

Then more I meled, and sayd apert:
590 ‘Me think thy tale unresounable.
Godes right is redy and evermore rert,
Or Holy Writ is bot a fable:
In Sauter is sayd a verce overte,
That spekes a poynt determynable:
595 “Thou quytes uchone as his desert,
Thou High-Kyng aye pertermynable.”
Now he that stod the long day stable,
And thou to payment com him before,
Then the lesse in werk to take more able,
600 And ever the lenger the lesse, the more.’

‘Of more and lesse in Godes **ryche**,’
That gentyl sayd, ‘**lys** no joparde:
For there is uch man payed inlyche,
Whether little or much be his **rewarde**.
605 For the gentyl **cheftayn** is no chyche,
Whether-so-ever He dele, **nesch** or hard:
He laves His giftes as water of diche,
Or gotes of **golf** that never **charde**.
His **fraunchis** is **large** that ever dard
610 To Him that mas in **synne** rescowe.
No blisse **bes** fro hem **reparde**,
For the **grace** of God is gret inow.

‘Bot now thou **motes**, me for to **mate**,
That I my peny have wrong tan here:
615 Thou says that I, that com to late,
Am not **worthy** so gret lowere.
Where wystes thou ever any burn abate,
Ever so holy in his prayere,
That he ne forfeled, by sum kyn gate,
620 The **mede** sumtyme of hevens clere?
And aye the ofter, the **alder** thay were,
Thay laften right and wroghten **woghe**.
Mercy and grace **moste** hem then **stere**,
For the grace of God is gret inogh.

625 ‘But inogh of grace has innocent:
As sone as thay are **born**, by line
In the water of **baptem** thay dyssente.
Then are thay broght into the vyne;
Anon the day, with **derk endent**,
630 The night of deth dos to **enclyne**;

That wrought never **wrong** ere then thay went,
The gentyl Lord then payes His hyne.
Thay diden His **hest**: thay were thereinne;
Why schuld He not her labour **alow**,
635 Yis, and pay hem at the firste fyne?
For the grace of God is gret inow.

‘Inow is knowen that **mankynde** grete
First was wrought to blisse parfyt;
Our forme fader hit con **forfete**,
640 Thurgh an apple that he upon con bite;
All were we **dampned** for that **mete**
To die in doel, out of **delit**,
And sithen **wende** to helle hete,
Thereinne to wone withoute **respite**.
645 Bot thereon com a **bote** as tite:
Rich **blod ran** on **rode** so rogh,
And wyne water then at that plyt:
The grace of God wex gret inogh.

‘Inogh there wex, out of that welle,
650 Blod and water of **brode** wounde;
The blod us **boght** fro bale of helle,
And delyvered us of the deth **secounde**;
The water is baptem, the soth to telle,
That folwed the **glayve** so grymly **grounde**,
655 That wasches **away** the gyltes **felle**
That Adam with in deth us drownde.
Now is there noght in the worlde rounde
Bitwene us and blisse bot that He withdrow
And that is restored in **sely** stounde;
660 And the grace of God is gret inow.

‘Grace inow the man may have
 That synnes then new, if him repente;
 Bot with sorw and syt he mot hit **crave**
 And bide the payne **thereto** is **bent**.

- 665 Bot resoun of right that con not **rave**
 Saves evermore the **innocent**:
 Hit is a dome that never God **gave**
 That ever the **gyltles** schuld be schent.
 The **gyltyf** may **contryssyoun** hent
 670 And be thurgh mercy to grace thryght;
 Bot he to **gile** that never glent
 At **innocence** is **saf** and right.

- ‘Right thus I know wel in this **case**, –
 Two men to save is good by skylle:
 675 The **ryghtwys** man schal see His face;
 The **harmles hathel** schal come Him tille.
 The Sauter hit says thus in a **pace**:
 “Lord, who schal **clym** thy **highe hille**,
 Or **rest** withinne thy holy place?”
 680 Himself to **answare** he is not dille:
 “Hondelynges harme that did not ille,
 That is of hert both clene and lyght,
 There schal his **stepe stable** stille”: –
 The innocent is aye saf by right.

- 685 ‘The ryghtwys man also sertayn,
 Aproche he schal that **proper** pyle,
 That takes not her lif in vayn,
 Ne **glaveres** her **nieghbor** with no gile.
 Of this ryghtwys saw Salomon playn

690 How **koynt** duitour he con **aquyle**:
By wayes ful **streght** ho con him **strayn**,
And schewed him the regne of God **awhyle**,
As who says, “**Lo, yon lovely ile**,
Thou may hit wyne, if thou be **wight**.”
695 Bot hardily, withoute peril,
The innocent is aye saf by right.

‘**Anende** ryghtwys men yet says a gome, –
David, in Sauter, if ever ye saw hit:
“Lord, thy **servant** draw never to dome,
700 For non lyvande to thee is **justifyet**.”
Forthy to court when thou schal come,
There all our causes schal be triet,
Alegge the right, thou may be **innome**,
By this **ilk** speche I have aspyet.
705 Bot He on rode that **bloody** dyet,
Delfully thurgh handes thryght,
Gyve thee to passe, when thou art triet,
By innocence, and not by right.

‘**Ryghtwysly** who con rede,
710 He loke on boke and be **avayed**
How Jesus Him **welke** in **arethede**
And burnes her barnes unto Him brayde:
For hap and hele that fro Him yede,
To **touch** her childer thay fayr Him prayed;
715 His **dessyples** with **blame** let be hem **bede**,
And with her resouns ful fele restayed;
Jesus then hem swetely sayd:
“Do way, let childer unto me **tyght**:
To such is **hevenryche** arayed.” –

720 The innocent is aye saf by right.

XIII

‘Jesus con calle to Him His mylde,
And sayd His ryche no wye myght wynne,
Bot he com **thider** right as a childe,
Or elles nevermore com therinne, –
725 Harmles, true and undefylde,
Withoute **mote** or **mascle** of sulpande synne;
When such there knoken on the **bylde**,
Tite schal hem men the **yate unpynne**,
There is the blisse that con not **blynne**,
730 That the jueler **soght** thurgh **perre pres**,
And sold all his **god**, both **wolen** and **lynne**,
To bye him a perle was **mascelles**.

‘This makeles perle, that boght is **dere**,
The jueler gave for all his god,
735 Is like the reme of hevens clere
(So sayd the Fader of folde and flod):
For hit is **wemles**, clene and clere,
And endeles rounde, and blythe of mod,
And **commune** to all that ryghtwys were.
740 Lo, **even** in-myddes my brest hit **stode**:
My Lord the Lamb, that sched His blod,
He pyght hit there, in **token** of pese.
I rede thee **forsake** the worlde wod,
And **porchase** thy perle mascelles.’

745 ‘O mascelles perle, in perles **pure**,
That beres,’ quoth I, ‘the perle of pris,
Who formed thee thy fayr figure?’

That wrought thy **wede**, he was ful wyse.
Thy **beaute** com never of **nature**;
750 Pymalyon paynted never thy vys,
Ne Arystotel nauther by his **lettrure**
Of carped the kynde these propertes;
Thy colour passes the flor-de-lys,
Thyn **angel-havyng** so **clene cortes**.
755 Breve me, bryght, what kyn offys
Beres the perle so mascelles?’

‘My makeles Lamb, that all may **bete**,’
Quoth **scho**, ‘my dere destine,
Me **chese** to His make, **althagh unmete**
760 **Sumtyme semed** that **assemble**.
When I went fro your worlde **wete**,
He called me to His **bonerte**:
“**Com** hider to me, my **lemman** swete,
For mote ne spot is non in thee.”
765 He gave me **myght** and **als** beaute;
In His blod He **wesch** my wede on dese,
And corounde clene in **vergynte**,
And pyght me in perles mascelles.’

‘Why, mascelles **bryd**, that bryght con **flambe**,
770 That reiates has so rich and **ryf**,
What kyn **thing** may be that Lamb
That thee wolde **wedde** unto His wyf?
Over all other so high thou **clambe**,
To lede with Him so **ladyly** lif:
775 So many a comly anunder **cambe**
For Cryst haf lyved in much stryf, –
And thou con all tho dere out dryf,

And fro that **maryage** all other **depres**,
All only thyself, so stout and **stif**,
780 A makeles may and mascelles!’

XIV

‘Mascelles,’ quoth that mery quene,
‘**Unblemyst** I am, withouten blot,
And that may I with mensk **menteene**;
Bot “**makeles**” quene then sayd I not.
785 The Lambes wyves in blisse, we ben
A hundred and fourty-four thousande **flot**,
As in the **Apokalypce** hit is sene:
Saynt John hem saw all in a knot,
On the hille of Syon, that semely clot;
790 The **apostel** hem saw in gostly **dreme**,
Arayed to the **weddyng** in that **hil-coppe**,
The Newe City of Jerusalem.

‘Of Jerusalem I in speche **spelle**;
If thou wil know what **kyn** He be,
795 My Lamb, my Lord, my dere juelle,
My joy, my blisse, my lemman **fre**,
The prophete Ysaye of Him con **melle**,
Pitously, of His debonerte:
That **glorious** gyltles that man con **quelle**,
800 Withouten any **sake** of **felonye**,
“As a **schep** to the **slaght** there lad was He;
And as lamb that **clypper** in hande nem,
So closed He His mouth fro uch query”,
When **Jues** Him jugged in Jerusalem.

805 ‘In Jerusalem was my lemman **slayn**,

And **rent** on rode with boyes bolde:
All our bales to bere ful **bayn**,
He toke on Himself our cares colde;
With buffetes was His face **flayn**
810 That was so fayr on to **beholde**;
For synne He set Himself in vayn
That never had non Himself to **wolde**;
For us He let Him **flye** and folde,
And **brede** upon a **bustwys bem**;
815 As meke as lamb that no **playnt tolde**,
For us He **swalt** in Jerusalem.

‘Jerusalem, Jordan and Galalye,
Thereas **baptysed** the good Saynt John, –
His wordes acorded to Ysaye:
820 When Jesus con to-him-warde **gon**,
He sayd of Him this **professye**:
“Lo, Godes Lamb, as true as stone,
That dos away the synnes **drye**
That all this world has wrought upon”;
825 Himself ne **wroghte** never yet non;
Whether on Himself He con all **clem**.
His **generacyoun** who **rekken** con,
That **dyled** for us in Jerusalem?

‘In Jerusalem thus my **lemman** swete
830 **Twyes** for lamb was taken thare,
By true **recorde** of **ayther** prophete,
For mod so meke and all His fare.
The thrid tyme is thereto ful mete,
In Apokalypce wryten ful **yare**:
835 In-myddes the throne there sayntes **sete**,

The apostel John Him saw as bare,
Lesande the boke with leves sware,
There seven syngnettes were set in seme;
And at that sight uch douth con dare,
840 In helle, in erthe, and Jerusalem.

XV

‘This Jerusalem Lamb had never peche
Of other hue bot white jolyf
That mote ne mascle myght on streche,
For wolle white, so ronk and ryf;
845 Forthy uch saule that had never teche
Is to that Lamb a worthy wyf;
And thagh uch day a store He feche,
Among us comes nauther strot ne stryf,
Bot uchone enle we wolde were fyf:
850 The mo, the merier, so God me blesse;
In compayny gret, our luf con thryf,
In honour more, and never the lesse.

‘Lesse of blisse may non us bryng
That beren this perle upon our brest;
855 For thay of mote couthe never mynge
Of spotles perles that beren the crest.
Althagh our corses in clottes clynge,
And ye remen for routh withouten rest,
We thurghoutly haf knawying:
860 Of on deth ful our hope is drest;
The Lamb us glades, our care is kest,
He mirthes us all at uch a messe;
Uchones mirthe is brem and best,
And never ones honour yet never the lesse.

865 ‘**Lest** les thou leve my tale farande,
In Apokalypce is wryten in wro,
“I saw” (says John) “the Lamb Him **stande**
On the **Mount** of Syon, ful **thryven** and thro,
And with Him maydenes an hundred
thousande,
870 And **foure** and forty thousand mo;
On all her **forhedes** wryten I **fande**
The Lambes name, His faderes **also**;
A **hue** from heven I **herde tho**,
Like flodes fele laden runnen on **resse**;
875 And as thunder throwes in **torres** blo,
That lote, I leve, was never the lesse.

‘ “**Nautheles**, thagh hit **schowted** scharp,
And **ledden** loud althagh hit were,
A **note** ful new I herde hem warp,
880 To **lysten** that was ful **lovely** dere:
As **harpores harpen** in her **harpe**,
That newe song thay song ful clere;
In **sounande** notes, a gentyl carp,
Ful fayr the modes thay fonge in fere.
885 Right before Godes chayere,
And the foure bestes that Him **obes**
And the alder men so sad of chere,
Her song thay songen never the **lesse**.

‘ “**Nautheles** non was never so **quoynt**,
890 For all the craftes that ever thay knewe,
That of that song myght **syng** a poynt,
Bot that meyny the Lamb that sue;
For thay are boght fro the erthe **aloynte**

As newe fruyt to God ful **due**,
895 And to the gentyl Lamb hit are **anjoynt**,
As like to Himself of lote and hue:
For never **lesyng** ne tale **untrue**
Ne touched her tong, for no distresse;
That **moteles** meyny may never remue
900 Fro that mascelles mayster, never the lesse.” ’

‘Never the lesse let be my **thonk**,’
Quoth I, ‘my perle, thagh I appose;
I schuld not **tempte** thy wyt so wlonk,
To Crystes chamber that art **ichose**:
905 I am bot **mokke** and mul amonk,
And thou so rich a reken rose,
And bides here by this blysfyl bonk,
There lyves lyst may never lose.
Now, hende that **sympelnesse** cones **enclose**,
910 I wolde thee aske a thing **expresse**,
And thagh I be bustwys as a blose,
Let my **bone vayle** never the lesse.

XVI

‘Never the lesse cler I yow **bycalle**,
If ye con see hit be to done,
915 As thou art glorious withouten galle,
Withnay thou never my rufyl bone:
Haf ye no wones in castel-**walle**,
Ne **maner** there ye may mete and wone?
Thou telles me of Jerusalem the rich ryalle,
920 There David dere was dight on throne;
Bot by these holtes hit con not **hone**,
Bot in Judee hit is, that noble **note**.

As ye are mascelles under mone,
Your wones schuld be withouten mote.

- 925 ‘This moteles meyny thou cones of mele,
Of thousandes **thryght** so gret a **route**,
A gret city, for ye are fele,
Yow behoved have, withouten doute:
So comly a **pakke** of joly juele
930 Were evel done schuld **lye** thereoute.
And by these bonkes there I con **gele**,
I see no **byggynge** nowhere aboute.
I trow alone ye leng and **loute**
To **loke** on the glory of this gracious **gote**.
935 If thou has other byggynges **stoute**,
Now tech me to that mery mote.’

- ‘That mote thou menes in Judee londe,’
That special spyce then to me **spakk**,
‘That is the city that the Lamb con fonde
940 To suffer in sore for manes sake, –
The olde Jerusalem to **understonde**;
For there the olde **gylt** was done to **slake**.
Bot the newe, that lyght of Godes sonde,
The apostel in Apokalypse in teme con take;
945 The Lamb there, withouten spottes **blake**,
Has feryed thider His fayre flote;
And as His **flok** is withouten **flake**,
So is His mote withouten mote.

- ‘Of motes two to carpe clene, –
950 And “Jerusalem” **hyght** bothe, nautheles:
That **nis** to yow no more to mene

Bot “city of God” or “sight of pese”.
In that one, our pese was made at **ene**:
With payne to suffer, the Lamb hit chese.
955 In that other is noght bot pese to **glene**,
That aye schal last, withouten **reles**;
That is the **burgh** that we to **pres**,
Fro that our flesch be layd to **rote**,
There glory and blisse schal ever **encres**
960 To the meyny that is withouten mote.’

‘Moteles may, so meke and **mylde**,’
Then sayd I to that lovely flour,
‘Bryng me to that **bygly** bylde,
And let me see thy blysful bour.’
965 That schene sayd, ‘That God will schylde:
Thou may not **enter** withinne His **tour**.
Bot of the Lamb I have thee aquylde
For a sight thereof, thurgh gret favour.
Outwith to see that clene **cloystor**
970 Thou may, bot inwith not a fote:
To **streich** in the **strete** thou has no **vygour**,
Bot thou were clene, withouten mote.

XVII

‘If I this mote thee schal **unhyde**,
Bow up toward this bornes **heved**,
975 And I anende thee on this **side**
Schal **sue**, til thou to a hille be weved.’
Then wolde I no lenger bide,
Bot lurked by **launces** so lovely **leved**,
Til on a hille that I aspyed
980 And blusched on the burgh, as I forth drevd,

Biyonde the brok fro-me-warde keved,
That schyrer then sunne with schaftes schon.
In the Apokalypce is the [fasoun](#) preved,
As devises hit the apostel John.

- 985 As John the apostel hit saw with sight,
I saw that city of gret [renoun](#):
Jerusalem so new and [ryally](#) dight,
As hit was lyght fro the [heven adoun](#).
The burgh was all of brende gold bryght,
990 As glemande glasse burnist broun,
With gentyl gemmes anunder pyght:
With [bantels](#) twelve on [basyng](#) boun,
The fundementes twelve of rich [tenoun](#);
Uch [tabelment](#) was a [serlepes](#) stone,
995 As [derely](#) devises this ilk [toun](#)
In Apokalypce the apostel John.

- As John these stones in writ con [nemme](#),
I knew the name after his tale.
Jasper hyght the firste gemme
1000 That I on the firste [base](#) con wale:
He glente grene in the lowest [hemme](#);
Saffer helde the secounde [stale](#);
The [calsydoyne](#) then withouten wemme
In the thridde table con [purely](#) pale;
1005 The emerad the [furthe](#), so grene of [scale](#),
The [sardonyse](#) the fyfthe stone;
The [sexe](#) the [ruby](#) he con hit wale,
In the Apokalypce the apostel John.

Yet joyned John the [crysolyt](#),

1010 The seventh gemme in **fundament**;
The **aghtthe**, the beryl, **clere** and white;
The **topace twynne-hue**, the nente endent;
The **crysopase** the tenth is **tyt**;
The **jacynght**, the enleventh gent;
1015 The twelfth, the gentylest in uch a plyt,
The **amatyst purple** with ynde blent;
The wal above the bantels bent
Of jasper, as glasse that glysnande schon.
I knew hit by his **devisement**,
1020 In the Apokalypce, the apostel John.

As John devised, yet saw I thare:
These twelve degrees were brod and stayre;
The city stod **above** ful sware,
As long as brod as high ful fayre,
1025 The stretes of gold as glasse all bare,
The wal of jasper that glent as glayre;
The wones **withinne enurned** ware
With all **kynnes** perre that myght **repayre**.
Then helde uch **sware** of this **manayre**
1030 Twelve **forlonge space** ere ever hit fon,
Of hyght, of **brede**, of **lenthe** to kayre,
For **meten** hit saw the apostel John.

XVIII

As John him wrytes, yet more I sye:
Uch **pane** of that place had thre yates;
1035 So twelve in poursent I con **aspye**,
The **portales pyked** of riche plates,
And uch a **yate** of a **margerye**,
A **parfyt** perle that never **fates**;

- Uchone in [scrypture](#) a name con [plye](#)
1040 Of Israel barnes, folwande her dates, –
That is to say, as her [byrth-whates](#):
The [aldest](#) aye first [thereon](#) was done.
Such lyght there lemed in all the [strates](#),
Hem [nedde](#) nauther sunne ne [mone](#).
- 1045 Of sunne ne mone had thay no [nede](#):
The self God was her lambe lyght,
The Lamb her [lantyrne](#), withouten drede;
Thurgh Him blysned the burgh all bryght.
Thurgh [wowe](#) and won my lokyng yede:
1050 For [sotyle](#) clere, noght lette no lyght;
The highe throne there myght ye [hede](#),
With all the [apparaylmente](#) umbe-pyght
As John the apostel in termes tyght;
The high Godes self hit sat upon;
1055 A [rever](#) of the throne there [ran](#) out right,
Was bryghter then both the sunne and mone.

- Sunne ne mone schon never so swete
As that foyssoun flod out of that [flet](#);
Swythe hit swange thurgh uch a strete,
1060 Withouten [fylthe](#) or galle or [glet](#).
[Kyrk](#) thereinne was non yete,
Chapel ne temple that ever was set:
The Almyghty was her [mynster mete](#),
The Lamb the [sacrefyce](#) there to [refet](#).
1065 The yates [stoken](#) was never yet,
Bot evermore open at uch a lone;
There entres non to take [reset](#)
That beres any spot anunder mone.

The mone may thereof **acroche** no myght:
 1070 To spotty ho is, of body to **grym**;
 And also there nis never night:
 What schuld the mone there **compas** clym
 And to **even** with that worthy lyght
 That schines upon the brokes brym?
 1075 The planetes are in to pore a **plyght**,
 And the **selve** sunne ful fer to **dym**.
 Aboute that water are **tres** ful **schym**,
 That twelve fruytes of **lif** con bere ful sone:
 Twelve sythes on yere thay beren ful frym,
 1080 And **renowles** new in uch a mone.

Anunder mone so gret mervayle
 No **fleschly** hert ne myght endure
 As when I blusched upon that bayle,
 So **ferly** thereof was the **fasure**;
 1085 I stod as stille as dased **quayle**
 For **ferly** of that fresch figure,
 That **felde** I nauther rest ne **travayle**,
 So was I **ravyste** with **glymme** pure.
 For I **dar** say, with concience sure,
 1090 Had bodyly burn abiden that bone,
 Thagh alle clerkes him had in **cure**,
 His **lif** were lost anunder mone.

XIX

Right as the **maynful** mone con rise
 Ere then the **day-glem** drive all down,
 1095 So **sodenly** on a wonder wyse
 I was ware of a prosessyoun:
 This noble city of rich enprise

- Was sodenly **ful**, withoute sumoun,
Of such **vergyne**s in the **same gyse**
1100 That was my blysfyl anunder crowne;
And corounde were all of the same fasoun,
Depaynt in perles and wedes white;
In uchones brest was bounden boun
The blysfyl perle, with gret delit.
- 1105 With gret delit thay **glod** in fere
On golden gates that glent as glasse;
Hundred thousandes I wot there were,
And all in sute her **livres wasse**;
Tor to telle the gladdest chere.
- 1110 The Lamb before con proudly passe,
With hornes seven of red gold clere;
As prayded perles His wedes wasse.
Toward the throne thay trone a **tras**;
Thagh thay were fele, no **pres** in plyt,
- 1115 Bot mylde as maydenes **seme** at **Masse**,
So drow thay forth with gret delit.
- Delit that there His **come** encroched,
To much hit were of for to **melle**:
These alder men, when He aproched,
1120 **Grovelyng** to His **fete** thay felle;
Legiounes of anges **togeder** voched
There cast **ensens** of swete **smelle**.
Then glory and gle was new abroched:
All songe to love that gay juelle;
- 1125 The steven myght strike thurgh the erthe to
helle
That the Vertues of heven of joy endite;

To love the Lamb His meyny in melle
Iwysse I laght a gret delit.

- Delit the Lamb for to devise,
1130 With much mervayl, in mynde went;
Best was He, blythest, and most to pryse,
That ever I herde of speche spent:
So worthy white were wedes His,
His lokes symple, Himself so gent.
1135 Bot a wounde ful wyde and wete con wyse
Anende His hert; thurgh hyde to-rent
Of His white side His blod out sprent.
'Alas,' thought I, 'who did that spyt?
Any brest for bale oghte have forbrent,
1140 Ere he thereto had had delit.'

- The Lamb delit non lyst to wene:
Thagh He were hurt and wounde had,
In His semblaunt was never sene,
So were His glentes glorious glad.
1145 I loked among His meyny schene,
How thay with lif were laste and lade.
Then saw I there my little quene,
That I wende had standen by me in slade.
Lord, much of mirthe was that ho made
1150 Among her feres that was so white.
That sight me gart to thenk to wade,
For luf-longing, in gret delit.

Delit me drof in iye and ere;
My manes mynde to maddyng malt:

- 1155 When I saw my frely, I wolde be there,
Biyonde the water thagh ho were **walt**;
I thoght that no thing myght me **dere**,
To **fech** me bur and take me **halte**,
And to **start** in the strem schuld non me stere
- 1160 To **swymme** the remnaunt, thagh I there
swalte.
Bot of that **mynt** I was bitalt;
When I schuld start in the strem **astray**,
Out of that **cast** I was bycalt:
Hit was not at my princes pay.
- 1165 Hit **payed** Him not that I so **flonc**
Over **mervelous** meres, so mad arayed;
Of **race** thagh I were **rasch** and ronk,
Yet **rapely** therein I was restayed:
For right as I **sparred** unto the **bonk**,
- 1170 That **brath** out of my dreame me **brayd**.
Then **wakened** I in that erber wlonk:
My hede upon that huyle was layd
Thereas my perle to grounde strayd.
I **raxled** and fel in gret **affray**;
- 1175 And **sykyng** to myself I sayd,
'Now all be to that princes pay.'

- Me payed ful **ille** to be **outfleme**
So sodenly of that fayr **regioun**,
Fro all tho sightes so quik and **queme**;
- 1180 A longing hevy me strok in **swone**,
And **rewwfully** then I con to **reme**:
'O, perle,' quoth I, 'of rich renoun,
So was hit me dere that thou con deme

In this veray avysyoun!

1185 If hit be veray and soth sermoun
That thou so stykes in garlande gay,
So wel is me in this doel-doungoun
That thou art to that princes pay.'

To that princes pay had I aye bent,
1190 And yerned no more then was me given,
And holden me there in true entent,
As the perle me prayed that was so thryven,
As helde, drawnen to Godes present,
To mo of His mysterys I had ben driven.
1195 Bot aye wolde man of hap more hent
Then myght by right upon hem clyven:
Therefore my joy was sone to-riven,
And I cast of kythes that lastes aye.
Lord, mad hit are that agayns thee stryven
1200 Or proferen thee oght agayns thy pay.

To pay the prince or sette saght,
Hit is ful ethe to the good Krystyin:
For I have founde Him, both day and naght,
A God, a lord, a frende ful fyne.
1205 Over this huyle this lote I laght,
For pyty of my perle enclynin;
And syn to God I hit bytaght,
In Crystes dere blessyng and myne,
That in the forme of bred and wyne
1210 The prest us schewes uch a day.
He gyve us to be His homly hyne,
And precious perles unto His pay. Amen.
Amen.



CLEANNESS

Foreword

Both *Cleanness* and *Patience* are commonly referred to as ‘homiletic’ poems, because their structure is that of a sermon: a biblical text provides the announced ‘theme’, which is then illustrated by a narrative *exemplum* or (if more than one story is told) *exempla*. Chaucer’s Pardoner’s Tale is probably the best-known literary version of this homiletic procedure: the Pardoner’s ‘theme is alwey oon’ [theme is always the same] – to wit, *Radix malorum est cupiditas* [the love of money is the root of all evil], from 1 Timothy 6:10 (*Canterbury Tales* VI.333–4) – and he regularly reinforces it by ‘ensamples many oon’ [many exempla: 435]; his ‘tale’ is in fact one such typical sermon-with-exemplum, told to illustrate his homiletic tactics for screwing monetary offerings out of his congregation. In the case of *Cleanness* and *Patience*, the scriptural *theme* is from the Beatitudes (Matthew 5): ‘Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God’, cited at C 27–8, and ‘Blessed are they who suffer [*patiuntur*]’, cited at Pa 27–8. In both cases, the New Testament text is then illustrated in converse by Old Testament stories which furnish exempla of the *unblessed* fate met by the *unclean* or *unpatient*: the story of Jonah acts as the single exemplum in *Patience*; and, in

Cleanness, the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the overthrow of Belshazzar function as three linked exempla declared at the conclusion to have ‘shown in a threefold manner’ (‘upon thrynne wyses ... schewed’: 1805) the wrath visited upon the ‘unclean’.¹

The negative implication of the Beatitude quoted in *Cleanness* is at once pointed out (the unclean will be excluded from God’s presence) and demonstrated by a rehearsal (33–176) of the New Testament parable of the wedding guest banished from the festivities because he is unsuitably dressed in soiled clothing (135–6) – the allegorical exemplum used by Christ Himself (Matthew 22:1–14) to stress the moral and spiritual fitness required for admittance to the heavenly feast of the hereafter. ‘Uncleanness’ (30, 168) bears, up to this point, a general metaphorical sense explicitly explained as ‘any kind of wrongdoing’ (169–92).

The three Old Testament exempla, however, demonstrate God’s aversion to ‘uncleanness’ in a narrower metaphorical sense of the term: the first two show the wholesale obliteration consequent upon ‘fylthe of the flesch’ (202, 547) – that is, sexual perversion; and the third the vengeance visited upon Belshazzar for his ‘defilement’ (1149–52, 1798) of the sacred vessels (by using them to get drunk) – that is, ‘pollution’ in the specific sense of desecration. The argument is not that these specific types of dirtiness are more damnable than other kinds of sinful ‘uncleanness’: as is clearly pointed out (177–92, 549–

56), *any* dirty ‘specks’ or ‘spots’ of *any* sin will serve to exclude the bearer of them from the beatific vision. But other (and potentially graver) sins are punished by God with the calm deliberation characteristic of His deity: Lucifer and Adam were punished severely, but without perturbation of divine ‘measure’ and ‘methe’ (215, 247). But in the case of ‘filth’ in its narrower (sexual) sense, those noble virtues (‘frethewes’) are ‘forgotten’ (203) and God reacts ‘hastily’ and ‘hotly’ (200, 598–9), taking more terrible and immediate *temporal* action to remove the dirt from the face of His earth. Similarly, Belshazzar’s earthly punishment was greater (1149–56) than that of his father, whose chastisement for blasphemous pride is less violently total and final (1661–1708). Thus, while the ultimate spiritual penalty for all ‘uncleanness = sin’ is the same – that is, loss of the beatific vision – ‘uncleanness’ in these narrower figurative senses catches God on the raw, short-circuiting His usual temperate calm, in the same way as human beings react with instinctive revulsion (rather than rational consideration) to remove from their vicinity what is felt as ‘dirty’ (32, 597–600).

It will be apparent that, in the conduct of his argument, the poet is exploiting the polysemy of words associated with ‘cleanness’ and ‘dirt’.² The literal sense of such terms – appearing in the ‘fyled’ [defiled, dirtied] clothing of the wedding guest (136) and the ‘clene’ cloth spread by Abraham when he is host to God (634) – underpins larger and narrower extended applications of them: uncleanness as the

wrong-doing still indicated by such expressions as ‘dirty work’; and uncleanness in the specific reference it can still have to the ‘dirt’ and ‘filth’ of pornography. The terminology can thus be used in the poem as a rhetorical concertina, closing down to the specific and stretching out to the general, so that (in the discursive links that provide the interpretative moral) the exempla can be pointed to as serving a double (and even contradictory) function: distinguishing sexual or sacrilegious *filth* as attracting a peculiar revulsion not elicited by other offences (as at 197–204, 577–80, 1143–56), yet simultaneously suggesting that such angry disgust essentializes the effect on a pure and *clene* God of *all* uncleanness in its larger sense of ‘sin’ (as at 545–52, 1805–8).

In the third exemplum, the word *clene* often figures in the aesthetic sense in which it was applied to the skills and products of arts and crafts to suggest elegance, precision and nice intricacy. The holy vessels are thus ‘corven ful clene’ and ‘clene wrought’ (1382, 1455; cf. 1287–8), the high art with which they are associated, in their bejewelled intricacy of design, serving to equate Belshazzar’s sacrilegiously ‘unclean’ defilement of them with vandalism, his want of awe for their sacred purity coming across as an aesthetic obtuseness to the art that had prompted his Gentile father, Nebuchadnezzar, to respect them and the God they served (1309–18). The conflation of spiritual with aesthetic sensibility colours the entire characterization of Belshazzar, who is presented (as he is not in the Vulgate) as loutish, gross and coarse. This

characterization of the ‘unclean’ in fact runs throughout the poem, in which fitness or unfitness for courtly society acts, from the Parable of the Wedding Guest on, as a measure of ‘cleanness’ or ‘filth’.

‘Cleanness’, that is, is defined in courtly and aristocratic terms which are partly the result of connotations of *clene* which have no analogue in Modern English. The above-mentioned art and magnificence to which *clene* could refer are part of a larger semantic area of the word and its cognates, which had well-attested senses of ‘decent, becoming, fine, elegant, appropriately splendid or rich’³ – that is, fit for cultivated contexts and company. The word could thus refer to social as well as to aesthetic good form, to decorum and elegance, as when the adverb ‘clanly’ is applied to the manner in which Daniel greets King Belshazzar (1621).

Clene was, in short, a protean word, and the poet has taken full advantage of its range of meanings to create lexical links between hygiene, moral probity and fidelity, spiritual sanctity, sexual mores, and social and aesthetic refinement. He has also used it to progress the argument, for progression in the argument there certainly is. The third part plays a bold and imaginative variation on the pattern and the logic established in the first two stories. As the ‘fylthe of the flesch’ (202) had been represented as, paradoxically, both *representatively* and *especially* dirty – typifying the staining or ‘spot’ of all sin (165–92, 549–56), but contrasted with the falls of Lucifer and Adam (197–252), who were punished with less

rabidly violent revulsion – so the defilement of the vessels is given both a general applicability and a peculiar gravity as revealed in a punishment that was greater than that meted out to other offences. The general applicability comes in a preliminary allegorization of the soul reconciled to God as a vessel sanctified to His usage:⁴ when cleansed through shrift, the soul becomes consecrated to God, so that relapse is equivalent to blasphemous defilement of church vessels (1129–52). In this way, the especial sense of shocking indecency aroused by sacrilege can be presented as a measure of the effect on God of *all* sin – though the especially awful nature of the particular kind of defilement at issue is again pointed to as something proved by the *greater* punishment it historically attracted, as revealed in the contrast between the fates of Belshazzar, who defiled the vessels, and of his father Nebuchadnezzar, who had seized them as booty when he sacked Jerusalem (1149–56).

This contrast is a more focused and pervasive one than were its counterparts earlier in the poem (the falls of Lucifer and Adam as contrasted with the subsequent cataclysmic punishments visited on sexual perversion). For it is here developed into a large and powerful character contrast between what the alliterative metre epitomizes as the ‘noble’ Nebuchadnezzar (1218, 1226, 1338, 1430) and the ‘bolde’ Belshazzar (1333, 1357, 1450, 1537, 1558, 1709, 1746), a contrast which has little basis in the Vulgate, or in medieval reception of the Vulgate, in

which the two despots figure as fairly comparable foes of the early Church, as that was represented by the Jewish nation which they conquered and enslaved. These recurrent epithets come interestingly to typify the relationship between a source and a creative talent and the growth of a 'new' story out of an old: superficially unremarkable as very comparable epithets for the two typical conqueror kings of the Vulgate, they inevitably come to reflect the poet's own contrast between the imperious patrician and the shameless lager lout. Nebuchadnezzar, as the foil to Belshazzar, becomes in effect the hero of the third part, and turns out to be a more interesting, if more flawed, hero than were the foils to the sinners of the first two stories (Noah and Abraham, whose counterpart in the third section is, strictly, Daniel, who, however, plays a somewhat mechanical role and is undeveloped as a character endowed with the positive qualities lacked by Belshazzar, in which function he is replaced by Nebuchadnezzar). Nebuchadnezzar is portrayed (1217–24, 1304–32) as a violent, resolute, proud and aspiring man, whom the poet invests both with grandeur and with an appreciation of grandeur, of quality and greatness, other than his own. Though cruel and merciless in his treatment of the conquered Jewish princes, he is impressed by the high art of the temple vessels, which he has reverently and carefully put away, his aesthetic sensibility becoming a measure of his spiritual susceptibility to Christian truth, the intimation of the true God, of whom he has 'a hope [inkling] in his

herte' (1653). Daniel and this 'hope' just manage to keep in check, to 'meken' [humble] from time to time, his proud 'mynde' and 'maysterful' behaviour, his dominating spirit and kingly ambitions and energies (1325–8, 1653–6). His death is recorded in an elegiac spirit (1329–32), but the character sketch has prepared the way for the later flashback (1642–1708) in which his blasphemous comparison of himself and his creation (the city of Babylon) with God and His creation is punished with a seven-year period of madness in which he roams the wasteland like an animal, but which opens his eyes to the greatness of God, and from which he does, therefore, eventually emerge to be restored to his royal 'state' (1708), the greatness that is also a measure of his spiritual status and dignity.

The poem thus establishes Nebuchadnezzar as a man with both a redemptive and yet a dangerous sense of greatness, a *maysterful* spirit, precariously restrained by a sense of a greater greatness, a sense epitomized by his appreciation of the rich art of the vessels. The poet plainly shares that appreciation, devoting many verses, not only to the workmanship of the vessels (1441–88), but also to the wondrous city of Babylon (1377–92). When Nebuchadnezzar makes that fatal boast (1661–8), therefore, one can feel that barely restrained *maysterful* pride breaking free of its controlling awe of the God suggested to him by such vessels (see [1325–8](#), [1653–6](#)) – and one can also sympathize with his pride. An allusion to the boast of Lucifer is plainly intended, for there are several verbal

and other parallels between the two passages (205–13, 1657–71), and Nebuchadnezzar's boast plays a part in the poem identical with that played by Lucifer's, in that it draws on itself a punishment that is contrasted with that incurred by a subsequent act of *fylthe*. But it is quite clear that the poet finds in his boast a measure of the pride and greatness that is his redemption as well as his dangerous flaw: to have built Babylon, as the poem itself makes clear (1377–92), is no empty boast, and is one reason why Nebuchadnezzar represents a redeemable sinner, whereas his son is represented, by a selective concentration on some biblical details, as in *every* sense simply a Philistine with no sense of greatness or of art that can be worked on to bring him to spiritual awareness, and who understands only one language: that of the churl's club (rather, be it noted, than the chivalric sword) that he himself is pictured as taking to his idols when they refuse to give him what he asks (1340–48: unparalleled in the Vulgate). In short, the contrast between the two men, inventive and expressive, carries and structures the whole meaning and effect of this third part of the poem. For the lengthy flashback (1642–1708) serves to reintroduce the now dead Nebuchadnezzar, reinforcing the earlier contrast (1321–56) in regnal sequence, between the *noble* father and the *bold* and brutish son, with a contrast between the purgative punishment for pride in creative art undergone by Nebuchadnezzar and the perdition about to be visited on his son's gross insensibility to the same.

It is worth recalling that the official theology of the poet's day in fact represented the sins of the spirit (pride, envy, avarice, wrath) as indicative of a spiritual disorder of a deeper and graver kind than was the weakness testified to by the sins of the flesh (gluttony, lust, sloth). And, in the scale of gravity, Lucifer's sin of pride weighed the heaviest. In this poem, by contrast, Lucifer's sin of believing he could compare and compete with God (211–12), and Nebuchadnezzar's recommission of this fatal Luciferic error (1662), are represented as somehow less sickening than a squalid sensuality which is seen as a defilement of a beautiful 'art' of sex *portrayed* and *compassed* by God (697–700) and than the defilement of the vessels similarly *portrayed* and *compassed* by the incomparable *science* [art] of Solomon (1454–5, 1465). The theology here is perhaps not especially sound, and is at the least eccentric. But to point to its questionable view of the relative gravity of different sins would be to oversimplify an argument that, if sometimes wayward, is actually a lot more intricate and involves the interaction of several different senses of *clene* within a complex poem, where the contrast between *clannes* and *fylthe* is also an alternation between bejewelled splendour and cataclysmic violence, between scenes of refined, courtly decorum and the yelled obscenities of the Sodomites or the drunken, barbaric splendour of a Babylonian feast.

The diverse material is patterned into a whole, not only by a complex web of parallels and contrasts, but by the tripartite structure which the poet clearly

intended to act as an important organizing principle. A threefold division was not uncommon in sermons,⁵ and Ecclesiastes 4:12 was sometimes cited in support of it: ‘a threefold cord is not quickly broken’. And, though the first *exemplum* in the poem is actually a retelling (51–176) of the New Testament parable of the guest expelled from the wedding feast because he is not properly dressed for the occasion, that story is omitted from the visual and verbal representation of the poem’s structure in the manuscript, in which a threefold division is clearly inscribed.⁶ For the manuscript signals three major sections (one for each of the Old Testament stories), these sections being marked by extra-large capitals at lines 1, 557 and 1157. (Smaller capitals are used to indicate new developments within these major sections, as in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, whose larger four-fitt structure is likewise indicated by larger and more elaborate capitals.) Moreover, the poet himself clearly subordinates the New Testament parable to a controlling triple structure when he claims at the end to have demonstrated God’s hatred of uncleanness ‘upon thrynne wyse’ (1805). He equally clearly intends a parallel to be seen between this and the three-word message ‘*MANE, TECHAL, PHARES*’ that forms the writing on the wall seen by Belshazzar. For the words are interpreted as constituting three different ways of warning Belshazzar of his end, a message ‘merked in thrynne’ (1727) that announces his downfall ‘upon thre wyse’ (1728). The word *thrynne* indicates a tripartite unity (see note to [1727](#))

and the poet plainly conceives of his own poem as a similar triple warning delivered to the unclean ‘upon thrynne wyses’ – just as in *Patience* (13, 28, 37–40) he points to a lexical parallel between the first and the last Beatitude which is also a feature of the poem itself (in which the first and last lines are near-identical). And, although *Cleanness* is not circular in the strict sense that its opening line is repeated almost verbatim at the end (as happens in *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain*, as well as in *Patience*), the closing lines convey a strong sense of a reprise that leads into a circling back to the opening. The summary of the moral of the stories, that uncleanness ‘Entyses Him [God] to be tene’ and that ‘clannes is His comfort and quoyntyse He loves’ (1808–9), reiterates key words and collocations: God’s ‘tene’ at uncleanness (cf. 283, 687); the collocation with ‘Entyses’ (cf. 1137); the word *quoynt-*, strongly associated with the elegance and seemliness appropriate to God’s court and presence (cf. 54, 160, 1287, 1382, 1459); and the collocation with *clene* (cf. 1287). The closing prayer, ‘That we gon gay in our gere’ and ‘may serve in His sight’, then circles further back to the introductory parable and its emphasis on decent clothing – now merged with the ‘gay gere’ of the holy vessels (1444, 1505, 1568; cf. 16) – and thence to a recapitulation of the opening reference to the priests who serve in God’s presence (5–10).

Recommended Further Reading: Spearing 1987; Schmidt 1988; Lecklider 1997; Keiser 1997.

Cleanness

I

CLANNES whoso kyndely couthe **commende**,
And rekken up all the resouns that ho by
right asks,
Fayre formes myght he fynde in **forthering**
his speche,
4 And in the **contrary kark** and **combraunce**
huge.

For wonder **wroth** is the Wye that wrought
alle thinges
With the freke that in fylthe folwes Him
after,
As renkes of relygioun that reden and syngen
8 And aprochen to His **presense** and prestes are
called.

Thay teen unto His temple and temen to
Himselven,
Reken with **reverence** thay richen His **auter**:
Thay hondel there His owne body and usen
hit bothe.
12 If thay in clannes be clos, thay cleche gret
mede;

Bot if thay counterfete craft and courtaysye
wonte,
As be honest outwith and inwith all fylthes,
Then are thay synful himself, and sulpen
altogeder

- 16 Bothe God and His gere, and Him to greme
cachen.

He is so clene in His court, the Kyng that all
weldes,
And honest in His householde, and hawerly
served,

- With angeles enourled in all that is clene
20 Bothe withinne and withouten, in wedes ful
bryghte:

Nif He nere scoymus and skyg, and non
scathe loved,

Hit were a mervayl to much, hit myghte not
falle.

- Cryst kyd hit Himself in a carp ones,
24 Thereas He hevened aght happes and hyght
hem her medes.

Me mynes on one among other, as Mathew
recordes,

That thus of clannes uncloses a ful clere
speche:

‘The hathel clene of his hert hapenes ful
fayre,

- 28 For he schal loke on our Lord with a love-
chere,’ –

As so says, to that sight seche schal he never
That any unclannes has on auwhere aboute.
For He that flemes uch fylthe fer fro His
herte

- 32 May not bide that bur that hit His body
neghe.

Forthy hye not to heven in hateres to-torne,
Ne in the harlotes hode and handes
unwaschen.

For what urthely hathel that high honour
holdes

- 36 Wolde like if a ladde com lutherly attyred,

When he were set solempnely in a sete riche
Above dukes on dese with dayntyes served?
Then the harlot with haste helded to the
table,

- 40 With rent cokres at the kne and his clutte
trasches,

And his tabarde to-torne and his totes oute,
Other any one of alle these, he schuld be
holden utter,

With mony blame ful big, a buffet paraunter,

- 44 Hurlled to the halle dor and harde thereoute
schowved, –

And be forboden that burgh, to bow thider
never

On payne of enprysonment and puttyng in
stokkes.

And thus schal he be schent for his **schrowde feble**,

48 Thagh never in **tale** ne in touch he **trespasse** more.

And if **unwelcum** he were to a worthlych prince,

Yet him is the High-Kyng harder in heaven, –
As Mathew meles in his Masse of that man riche

52 That made the **muckel mangerie** to **marye** his **ayre** dere,

And sende his **sonde** then to say that thay samen schulde,

And in comly quoyntyse to come to his **feste**:
‘For my **bulles** and my **bores** are bayted and slayne,

56 And my fedde fowles fatted with slaghte.

‘My polyle that is **penne-fed** and **partrykes** bothe,

With scheldes of **wylde swyn**, **swanes** and crones,

All is rotheled and **rosted** right to the sete.

60 Comes cof to my court ere hit colde worthe.’

When thay knewen his **cal** that thider come schulde,

All excused hem by the **skylle** he **scape** by myghte.

One had boght him a burgh, he sayd by his

trauthe –

- 64 ‘Now turne I thider as tite the toun to
beholde.’

Another nayed also and **nurned** this cause:
‘I have yerned and yat **yokkes** of oxen,
And for my byes hem boght: to bow have I
mester,

- 68 To see hem **pulle** in the **plow** aproche me
behoves.’

‘And I have wedded a wyf,’ so **wer** him the
thridde,

‘**Excuse** me at the court, I may not come
there.’

Thus thay **drow** hem adrey with daunger
uchone,

- 72 That non passed to the place, thagh he
prayed were.

Then the **ledische** lord liked ful ille
And had **dedayn** of that dede; ful dryly he
carpes,

He says: ‘Now for her owne sorwe thay
forsaken **habbes**.

- 76 More to **wyte** is her wrong then any **wille**
gentyl.

‘Then gos forth, my gomes, to the grete
stretes,

And **forsettes** on uch a side the city aboute
The **wayferande** frekes on fote and on horse,

80 Bothe burnes and burdes, the better and the worse.

‘Lathes hem luflyly to leng at my feste
And brynges hem blythely to burgh, as
barouns they were,
So that my **palayce platful** be pyght all
aboute.

84 These other wrechis, iwysse, worthy not
were.’

Then thay kayred and com that the **cost**
waked,
Broghten **bacheleres** hem with that thay by
bonkes metten,
Swyeres that swyftly sued on blonkes,

88 And also fele upon fote, of fre and of **bonde**.

When thay com to the court, keppte were
thay fayre,
Stightled with the **steward**, **stad** in the halle,
Ful manerly with **marschal** made for to sitte,
92 As he was dere of **degre** dressed his sete.

Then **segges** to the soverayn sayden
thereafter:

‘Lo, lord, with your leve, at your lege heste
And at thy **banne** we have broght, as thou
beden habbes,

96 Mony **renischche** renkes, and yet is **roum**
more.’

Sayd the lord to tho ledes: ‘Laytes yet ferre,

Ferkes out in the **felde**, and feches mo gestes.
Waytes **gorstes** and greves, if any gomes
lygges;

100 What kyn **folk** so there fare, feches hem
hider.

‘Be thay fyrce, be thay feble, **forlotes** none,
Be thay hole, be thay **halt**, be thay **on-yed**,
And thagh thay ben both blynde and
balterande **cruppeles**,

104 That my house may holly by **halkes** be fylled.

‘For redily these ilk renkes that me renayed
habbe,

And denounced me noght now at this tyme,
Schal never sitte in my **sale** my **soper** to fele,

108 Ne suppe on **sop** of my sewe, thagh thay
swelt schulde.’

Then the **sergauntes** at that sawe swengen
thereoute,

And **diden** the dede that was demed, as he
devised hade,

And with **peple** of all plytes the palayce thay
fylle;

112 Hit weren not all on **wyves sunes**, wonnen
with on fader.

Whether thay were worthy or worse, wel
were thay stowed,

Aye the best before and bryghtest attyred,
The **derrest** at the highe dese, that dubbed

were fayrest,

116 And sithen on lenthe biloogh ledes inowe;

And aye as segges **serely** semed by her
weddes,

So with a marschal at her mete mensked
thay were.

Clene men in compayny forknowen were
lyte,

120 And yet the symplest in that sale was served
to the fulle, –

Both with **menske** and with mete and
mynstralsye noble

And all the laykes that a lord aght in londe
schewe.

And thay begonne to be glad that good
drinke haden,

124 And uch man with his **mach** made him at
ese.

NOW inmyddes the mete the mayster him
bithoghte

That he wolde see the **semble** that samned
was there,

And **rehayte** rekenly the riche and the pore,

128 And cherisch hem all with his chere and
chaufen her joye.

Then he bowes fro his bour into the brode
halle

And to the best on the **bench**, and bede hem

be mery,

Solased hem with semblaunt and sylede
ferre,

132 **Tron** fro table to table, and talked aye
mirth.

Bot as he ferked over the **flor** he fonde with
his iye

A **thral** thryght in the **throng**, **unthryvandely**
clothed:

He was not for a **halyday** **honestly** arayed,

136 Ne no **festival frok**, bot **fyled** with werkes.

The gome was **ungarnyst** with good men to
dele,

And gremed therewith the grete lord, and
greve him he thoghte.

‘Say me, frende,’ quoth the freke with a felle
chere,

140 ‘How wan thou into this **won** in wedes so
foule?

‘The **abyt** that thou has upon no halyday hit
menskes.

Thou, burn, for no **brydale** art busked in
wed.

How was thou hardy this house for thyn
unhap to **neghe**

144 In on so **ratted** a robe, and rent at the sides?

‘Thou art a gome ungoderly in that **goun**
feble;

Thou praysted me and my place ful pore and
ful **gnede**

That was so **prest** to aproche my presense
hereinne.

148 Hopes thou I be a harlot thy **erigaut** to
prayse?’

That other burn was **abayst** of his brothe
wordes,

And **hurkeles** doun with his hed, the erthe he
beholdes.

He was so scomfit of his skylle, lest he scathe
hente,

152 That he ne wyst on **word** what he warp
schulde.

Then the lord wonder loude **laled** and cryed,
And talkes to his **tormenttours**: ‘Takes him,’
he biddes,

‘Byndes bihinde at his **bak** bothe two his
handes,

156 And felle **fettres** to his fete **festnes** bylive.

‘**Stik** him **stifly** in stokkes and stekes him
thereafter

Depe in my **doungoun** there doel ever
dwelles,

Greving and **gretying** and **gryspytyng** harde

160 Of **tethe tenfully** togeder, to **teche** him be
quoynte.’

Thus **comparisunes** Cryst the kyndom of

heven

To this **frelyche** fest that fele are to called.
For all are lathed luflyly, the luther and the
better,

164 That ever were **fulwed** in **font**, that feste to
have.

Bot war thee wel, if thou **wilt**, thy wedes ben
clene

And honest for the halyday, lest thou **harme**
lache,

For aproch thou to that Prince of parage
noble,

168 He hates helle no more then hem that are
souly.

Wich are then thy wedes thou **wrappes** thee
inne,

That schal schewe hem so schene, schrowde
of the beste?

Hit are thy werkes, wyterly, that thou
wroght **haves**,

172 And lyned with the lykyng that lay in thyn
herte

That tho be frely and fresch founde in thy
lyve,

And **fetyse** of a fayr forme, to fote and to
hande,

And sithen all thyn other lymmes lapped ful
clene:

176 Then may thou see thy Saviour and His sete

riche.

For fele fautes may a freke forfete his blisse,
That he the Soverayn ne see: then for slauthe
one,

As for bobaunce and bost and bolnande
pryde

180 Throly in the develes throte man thrynges
bylive.

For covetyse and colwarde and crokede
dedes,

For monsworne and mensclaght and to much
drinke,

For thefte and for threpyng unthonk may
man have;

184 For robborye and riboudrye and resouns
untrue,

And dysheriete and depryve dowrie of
wydoes,

For marryng of maryages and mayntnaunce
of schrewes,

For tresoun and trecherye and tyrauntrye
bothe,

188 And for false famacions and faynede lawes:

Man may mysse the mirth that much is to
prayse

For such unthewes as these, and thole much
payne,

And in the Creatores court come never more,

192 Ne never see Him with sight, for such sour
tournes.

BOT I have herkned and herde of many high
clerkes,

And als in resouns of right red hit myselven,
That that ilk proper Prince that Paradise
weldes

196 Is displeased at uch a poynt that plyes to
scathe, –

Bot never yet in no boke breved I herde
That ever He wrak so wytherly on werk that
He made,

Ne venged for no vilte of vice ne synne,

200 Ne so hastily was hot for hatel of His wille,

Ne never so sodenly soght unsoundely to
venge,

As for fylthe of the flesch that foles haf used.
For, as I fynde, there He forgat all His fre
thewes,

204 And wex wod to the wrake for wrath at His
herte.

For the firste felonye the false fende
wroghte,

While he was high in the heaven, hoven upon
lofte,

Of all these athel anges attled the fayrest,

208 And he unkyndely as a carle kyd a reward.

He saw noght bot himself, how semely he

were,

Bot his Soverayn he forsoke and sayde these
wordes:

‘I schal **telde** up my **trone** in the
tramountayne,

212 And be like to that Lord that the **lyft** made.’

With this word that he warp the wrake on
him lyghte.

Dryhtyn with His dere dome him drof to the
abye –

In the mesure of His mod, His **methe** never
the lesse;

216 Bot there He tynt the tythe-dole of His tour
riche.

Thagh the **feloun** was so fyrce for his fayre
weddes

And his glorious glem that glente so bryghte,
As sone as Dryhtynes dome drof to
himselven,

220 Thikke thousandes thro threwen thereoute,

Fellen fro the **fyrment** fendes ful blake,
Sweved at the first **swap** as the **snaw** thikke,
Hurled into **helle-hole** as the **hyve swarmes**.

224 Fylter fendene folk forty dayes lenthe

Ere that **stygande** storme stynte ne myghte;
Bot as smylt mele under smal **sive** smokes
forthikke,

So fro heven to helle that **hatel schor** laste,

228 On uche side of the **erde** aywhere ilyche.

This hit was a breme **breſt** and a big wrake,
And yet wrathed not the Wye, ne the **wrech**
ſaghtled,

Ne never wolde for **wylneſful** his worthy
God knowe,

232 Ne **pray** Him for no pyty, ſo **proud** was his
wille.

Forthy thagh the **rape** were ronk, the routhe
was little:

Thagh he be caſt into care, he kepes no
better.

Bot that other wrake that wex on wyſes hit
lyghte,

236 Thurgh the faut of a freke that fayled in
trauthe:

Adam **inobedyent**, **ordaynt** to bliſſe,
There **pryvyly** in Paradise his place was
deuiſed,

To lyve there in lykyng the lenthe of a terme

240 And then **enherite** that home that angeles
forgarte.

Bot thurgh the **eggyng** of Eve he ete of an
apple

That **enpoysened** all peples that parted fro
hem bothe,

For a **defence** that was dight of Dryhtyn
ſelven

244 And a **payne** thereon put and **apertly** holden.

The defence was the **fruyt** that the freke
touched,

And the dome is the deth that **drepes** us alle.
All in mesure and in methe was made the
vengaunce,

248 And eft amended with a mayden that make
hade never.

BOT in the thrid was **forthrast** all that thryve
schulde:

There was **malyce mercyles** and **maugre**
much schewed.

That was for fylthe upon folde that the folk
used

252 That then woned in the worlde withoute any
maysters.

Hit were the fayrest of forme and of face
alse,

The most and the meriest that maked were
ever,

The stifest, the stalworthest, that stod ever
on fete,

256 And lengest lif in hem lent of ledes all other.

For hit was the **forme foster** that the folde
bredde,

The athel **auncesteres** sunes that Adam was
called,

To whom God hade geven all that gayn

were,

260 All the blisse **bout** blame that body myght
have,

And those lykkest to the lede that lyved next
after.

Forthy so semely to see sithen were none;
There was no **law** to hem layd bot loke to
kynde

264 And kepe to hit, and all hit course clanky
fulfyll.

And then founden thay fylthe in fleschlyche
dedes,

And **controeved** agayns kynde contrary
werkes,

And used hem **unthryftyly** uchone on other,

268 And als **wymmen** with other **wylsfully**, upon
a **wronge** wyse.

So ferly **fouled** her flesch that the fende
loked

How the **deghter** of the douth were derely
fayre,

And fallen in felawschyp with hem on
folkene wyse,

272 And **engendered** on hem **jeauntes** wyth her
japes ille.

Those were men **methles** and **myghty** on
erthe,

That for her lothelyche laykes **alosed** thay

were.

He was famed for fre that **fyght** loved beste,
276 And aye the biggest in bale the beste was
holden.

And then eveles on erthe earnestly grewen,
And multiplyed **monyfolde** **inmonges**
mankynde;

For that the myghty on molde so marre these
other,
280 That the Wye that all wrought ful **wrothly**
begines.

When He knew uch countre **corrupte** in
hitselven,
And uch freke forloyned fro the right wayes,
Felle temptande **tene** touched his herte;
284 As wye wo him withinne warp to Himselfen:

‘Me **forthynkes** ful much that ever I man
made.

Bot I schal delyver and do away that doten
on this molde,
And **fleme** out of the folde all that flesch
weres;
288 Fro the burn to the **best**, fro bryddes to
fisches,

‘All schal doun and be dede and driven out
of erthe

That ever I set saule in, and sore hit me rues
That ever I made hem myself. Bot, if I may,

hereafter

292 I schal wayte to be ware her **wrenches** to
kepe.'

Then in worlde was a wye **wonyande** on
lyve,

Ful redy and ful ryghtwys, and **rewled** him
fayre;

In the drede of Dryhtyn his dayes he uses,

296 And aye glydande with his God: his grace
was the more.

Him was the name Noe, as is **inogh** knowen.
He had thre thryven sunes, and thay thre
wyves:

Sem **sothly** that one, that other hyght Cam,

300 And the **joly** Japheth was **gendered** the
thridde.

Now God in nye to Noe con **speke**

Wylde wrakfulle wordes, in His wille greved:

'The **ende** of all kynnes flesch that on erthe
meves

304 Is fallen forthwyth my face, and **further** hit I
thenke.

'With her **unworthelyche** werk me wlates
withinne;

The **gore** thereof me has greved and the
glette **nyed**.

I schal strenkle my distresse and **strye** all
togeder

308 Bothe ledes and londe and all that lif habbes.

‘Bot make to thee a **mancioun**, and that is
my wille,

A **cofer** closed of tres, clanlyche **planed**;
Work wones therein for wylde and for **tame**,

312 And then cleme hit with clay comly
withinne,

‘And all the **endentur** driven **daube** withoute.
And thus of lenthe and of large that lome
thou make:

Thre hundred of cubites thou holde to the
lenthe,

316 Of fyfty fayr overthwert **forme** the brede,

‘And loke even that thyn **ark** have of **hyght**
thretty;

And a **wyndow** wyde openande wrought upon
lofte,

In the compas of a **cubit** kyndely sware,

320 A wel ditande dor done on the side.

‘Haf halles thereinne and halkes ful mony,
Bothe **bolkes** and boures and wel bounden
penes.

For I schal waken up a water to **wasch** all the
worlde,

324 And quelle all that is **quik** with **quavande**
flodes;

‘All that **glydes** and gos and gost of lif
habbes,

I schal waste with my wrath that wonnes
upon erthe.

Bot my **forward** with thee I festen on this
wyse,

328 For thou in resoun has rengned and ryghtwys
ben ever:

‘Thou schal enter this ark with thyn athel
barnes,

And thy weddede wyf with thee thou take,
The makes of thy **mery** sunes; this meyny of
aghte

332 I schal **save** of manes saules, and swelte
those other.

‘Of uch best that beres lif busk thee a **couple**;
Of uch clene comly kynde enclose seven
makes,

Of uch **horwed** in ark **holde** bot a **payre**,

336 For to save me the sede of all **sere** kyndes.

‘And aye thou meng with the males the mete
ho-bestes,

Uch payre by payre, to plesse ayther other.
With all the fode that may be founde **frette**
thy cofer

340 For **sustnaunce** to yowself and also those
other.’

Ful **graythly** gos this good man and dos
Godes hestes

In drye drede and in daunger, that durst do

non other.

When hit was fettled and **forged** and to the
fulle graythed,

344 Then con Dryhtyn him dele dryly these
wordes:

‘NOW, Noe,’ quoth our Lord, ‘art thou all
redy?

Hast thou closed thy kyst with clay all
aboute?’

‘**Ye**, Lord, with thy leve,’ sayd the lede
thenne,

348 ‘All is wroght at thy word, as thou me wyt
lantes.’

‘Enter in then,’ quoth He, ‘and haf thy wyf
with thee,

Thy thre sunes, withouten threpe, and her
thre wyves.

Bestes, as I beden have, busk thereinne also,

352 And when ye are stowed stifly, stekes yow
thereinne.

‘Fro seven dayes ben **seyed**, I sende out
bylive

Such a routande **ryg** that **rayne** schal swythe,
That schal wasch all the worlde of werkes of
fylthe.

356 Schal no flesh upon folde be founden on
lyve, –

‘**Outtaken** you aght, in this ark stowed,

And sede that I wyl save of these sere bestes.
Now Noe never styntes that nye he begins
360 Ere all were stowed and stoken as the steven
wolde.

Then sone com the seventhe day, when
samned were alle,
And all woned in the whichche, the wylde
and the tame.

Then bolned the abyne and bonkes con ryfe,
364 Waltes out uch welle-hed in ful wode
stremes,

Was no brym that abod unbrosten bylive.
The muckel lavande logh to the lyft rered;
Mony clustered cloude clef all in cloutes:
368 To-rent uch a rayn-ryfte and rusched to the
erthe,

Fon never in forty dayes – and then the flod
rises,
Overwaltes uch a wode and the wyde felde.
For when the water of the welkyn with the
worlde mette,

372 All that deth myght drye drowned thereinne.

There was mone for to make when meschef
was knowen,
That noight dowed bot the deth in the depe
stremes.

Water wylger aye wex, wones that stryede,
376 Hurlled into uch house, hent that there

dwelled.

First feng to the **flyght** all that **fle** myghte;
Uche **burde** with her barn the byggyng thay
leves

And bowed to the high bonk, there brentest
hit weren,

380 And heterly to the high hilles thay haled on
faste.

Bot all was **nedles** her note, for never couthe
stynte

The roghe raynande ryg, the raykande
wawes,

Ere uch bothom was **brurdful** to the bonkes
egges

384 And uch a **dale** so depe, that demmed at the
brynkes.

The moste **mountaynes** on mor then was no
more **drye**,

And thereon **flokked** the folk for **ferde** of the
wrake.

Sithen the wylde of the wode on the water
flette:

388 Summe swymmed thereon, that save hemself
trowed,

Summe **styghe** to a **sted** and stared to the
heven,

Ruly with a loud rurd rored for drede;
Hares, **herttes** also, to the highe runnen;

392 **Bukkes**, bausenes and bulles to the bonkes
hyed.

And all cryed for care to the Kyng of heven,
Recoverer of the Creator thay cryed uchone;
That amounted the **mase**; His mercy was
passed,

396 And all His pyty departed fro peple that He
hated.

By that the flod to her fete **flowed** and
waxed,

Then uch a segge saw wel that synk him
behoved.

Freundes **fellen** in fere and fathmed togeder
400 To drye her **delful destine** and dien all
samen.

Luf lokes to luf and his leve takes,
For to **ende** all at ones, and for ever **twynne**.
By forty dayes were faren on folde no flesch
styryed

404 That the flod nade all freten with fyghtande
wawes.

For hit clambe uch a clyff cubites fiftene
Over the hygheste hille that hurred on
erthe.

Then **mourkne** in the **mudde** **moste** ful nedes
408 All that **spyrakle** in sprang – no sprawlyng
awayled:

Save the hathel **under hach** and his here

strange,
Noe, that oft nevened the name of our Lorde,
Him **aghtsum** in that ark – as athel God liked
–

412 There all ledes in lome lengede drye.

The ark hoven was on highe with hurlande
gotes,

Cast to kythes **uncouth**, the cloudes ful
nere.

Hit waltered on the wylde flod, went as hit
lyste,

416 Drof upon the depe dam; in daunger hit
semed:

Withoute mast other **myke** or mery
bawelyne,

Cable other capstan to **clyppe** to her **ankres**,
Hurrok other hand-helme hasped on rother,

420 Other any **sweande** sayl to sech after haven,

Bot flote forth with the **flyt** of the felle
wyndes:

Whederwarde so the water waft, hit
rebounde;

Oft hit rolled on rounde and rered on ende, –

424 Nif our Lord had ben the **lodesmon**, hem had
lumpen harde.

Of the lenthe of Noe lif to lay a lel date:

The **sex-hundreth** of his age and none odde
yeres,

Of secounde **monyth** the sevententhe day
rightes

428 **To-walten** all these welle-hedes, and the
water flowed, –

And **thryes** fyfty the flod of folwande dayes.
Uch hille was there **hid** with **ythes** ful graye.
All was wasted that there woned the worlde
withinne,

432 That ever flote other flewe other on **fote**
yede,

That **roghly** was the **remnaunt** that the rak
drives,

That all **gendres** so **joyst** were joyned
withinne.

Bot when the Lord of the lyft liked
Himselven

436 For to mynne on His man, His methe that
abides,

Then He wakened a wynd on wateres to
blowe.

Then lased the lake that large was ere;
Then He stek up the **stanges**, **stoped** the
welles,

440 Bede blynne of the **rayn**: hit **batede** as faste.

Then lased the logh, loukande togeder,
After harde dayes were out an hundred and
fyfty,
As that lyftande lome lugged aboute

444 Where the wynd and the weder **warpen** hit
wolde.

Hit saghtled on a **soft** day, synkande to
grounde:

On the **rasse** of a **rok** hit rest at the laste,
On the mount of Mararach, of Armene hilles,

448 That **otherwayes** on Ebru hit hatte the
Thanes.

Bot thagh the kyst in the craggess were closed
to bide,

Yet fyned not the flod ne fel to the bothemes;
Bot the highest of the egges **unhuled** were a
little,

452 That the burn **bynne** borde behelde the bare
erthe.

Then **waft** he open his wyndow and wysed
thereoute

A message fro that meyny hem moldes to
seche:

That was the raven so ronk, that rebel was
ever:

456 He was **colored** as the **cole**, **corbel** untrue.

And he fonges to the flyght and **fannes** on
the wyndes,

Hales high upon hyght to herken tithynges.
He **croukes** for comfort when **carayne** he
fyndes

460 Cast upon a clyff, there costes lay drye.

He had the smelle of the **smach** and smoltes
thider sone,

Falles on the foule flesch and fylles his
wombe,

And sone **yederly** foryete yisterday steven,

464 How the cheftayn him charged that the **chyst**
yemed.

The raven raykes him forth that **reches** ful
little

How all **fodes** there **fare**, elles he **fynde** mete.

Bot the burn bynne borde that **bod** to his
come

468 Banned him ful bitterly, with bestes all
samen.

He seches another **sondesmon** and settes on
the **douve**,

Brynges that bryght upon borde, blessed and
sayde:

‘Wende, worthilyche wyght, us wones to
seche;

472 Dryf over this dym water: if thou drye
fyndes,

‘Bryng **bodworde** to **bot**, blisse to us alle.

Thagh that **fowle** be false, fre be thou ever.’

Ho whyrled out on the weder on wynges ful
scharpe,

476 Dryly all along day, that durst never **lyghte**.

And when ho fyndes no folde her fote on to

piche,

Ho umbe-kestes the cost and the kyst seches.
Ho hitted on the eventide and on the ark
sittes.

480 Noe nymmes her anon and naytly her
stowes.

Noe on another day nymmes eft the douve,
And biddes her bow over the borne eft
bonkes to seche.

And ho skyrmes under skue and skowtes
about,

484 Til hit was negh at the night, and Noe then
seches.

ON ark on an eventide hoves the douve;
On stamyn ho stod and stille him abides.
What! Ho broght in her beke a braunch of
olyve,

488 Graciously umbe-growen all with grene
leves.

That was the syngne of savyte that sende
hem our Lorde

And the saghtelyng of Himself with tho sely
bestes.

Then was there joy in that gyn, where
jumpred ere dried,

492 And much comfort in that cofer that was
clay-daubed.

Meryly on a fayr morn, monyth the firste

That falles formast in the yere, and the first
daye,
Ledes loghen in that lome and loked
thereoute

496 How that wateres were **waned** and the
worlde **dryed**.

Uchon loved our Lord, bot lenged aye stille
Til that thay had **tithyng** fro the Tulk that
tyned hem thereinne.

Then Godes glam to hem glod that gladed
hem alle,

500 Bede hem **draw** to the dor, **delyver** hem He
wolde.

Then went thay to the wyket: hit walt open
sone.

Both the burn and his barnes bowed
theroute;

Her wyves walkes hem with and the wylde
after,

504 Throly **thrublande** in throng, throwen ful
thikke.

Noe of uch honest kynde nem out an **odde**,
And hevened up an auter and **halwed** hit
fayre,

And set a sacrefyce thereon of uch a sere
kynde

508 That was comly and clene – God kepes non
other.

When **bremly** brenned those bestes and the
breth rised,
The savour of his sacrefyce soght to Him
even
That all spedes and **spylles**; He spekes with
that ilke

512 In comly comfort ful clos and cortayse
wordes:

‘Now Noe, no more **nyl** I never **wary**
All the muckel mayne molde for no manes
synnes.
For I see wel that hit is soth that all segges
wyttes

516 To **unthryfte** are all throwen with **thoght** of
her hertes,

‘And aye has ben and wil be yet: fro her
barnage,
All is the mynde of the man to malyce
enclyned.
Forthy schal I never schende so **schortly** at
ones

520 As **disstrye** all for manes dedes, dayes of this
erthe.

‘Bot waxes now and wendes forth and
worthes to mony,
Multyplies on this molde, and menske yow
bityde.
Sesounes schal yow never **sese** of sede ne of
hervest,

524 Ne hete ne no **hard** forst, **umbre** ne **droghte**,

‘Ne the **swetnesse** of **somer**, ne the sadde
wynter,

Ne the night ne the day, ne the newe yeres,
Bot ever **renne** **restles**; **rengnes** ye thereinne.’

528 Therewith He blesses uch a best, and **bitaght**
hem this erthe.

Then was a skaylyng and skynlade when
scaped all the wylde:

Uch fowle to the flyght that fytheres myght
serve,

Uch **fissche** to the **flod** that **fynne** couthe
nayte,

532 Uch best to the **bent** that bites on erbes,

Wylde wormes to her won wrythes in the
erthe,

The fox and the folmarde to the frith
wyndes,

Herttes to the high **heth**, hares to gorstes,

536 And **lyounes** and **lebardes** to the **lake-ryftes**,

Hernes and **hauekes** to the highe roches,

The **hole-foted** fowle to the flod hyes,

And uch best at a brayd there him best likes.

540 The foure frekes of the folde fonges the
empire.

Lo, such a **wrakeful** wo for **wlatsume** dedes
Parformed the highe Fader on folk that He
made;

That He **chysly** had cherished He **chastysed**
ful harde

544 In **devoydyng**e the vilany that **venquyst** His
thewes.

Forthy **war thee** now, wye, that worschip
desyres

In His comlyche court, that kyng is of blisse,
In the fylthe of the flesch that thou be
founen never

548 Til any water in the worlde to wasche thee
fayle.

For is no segge under sunne so seme of his
craftes,

If he be sulped in synne that sittes unclene, –
On **spec** of a spot may spede to mysse

552 Of the sight of the Soverayn that sittes so
highe.

For that schewe me schal in tho shyre
houses,

As the beryl burnist **behoves** be clene,
That is sounde on uch a side and no **seme**
habbes,

556 Withoute mascle other mote, as margery
perle.

II

SITHEN the Soverayn in sete so sore
forthoghte

That ever He man upon molde merked to

lyve,
For he in fylthe was fallen, **felly** He venged,
560 When forferde all the flesch that He formed
hade.

Him rued that he hem **uprerde** and **raght**
hem **liflode**, –
And eft that He hem undyd, hard hit Him
thoghte:
For when the swemande sorwe soght to His
herte,
564 He **knit** a covenaut cortaysly with
mankynde there,

In the mesure of His mod and methe of His
wille,
That He schuld never for no syt **smyte** all at
ones
As to quelle all quikes for **qued** that myght
falle,
568 While of the lenthe of the londe lastes the
terme.

That ilk skylle for no scathe ascaped Him
never.
Whether wonderly he wrak on **wykked** men
after.
Ful felly for that ilk faut forferde a kyth
riche,
572 In the anger of His **ire**, that arwede mony.

And all was for that ilk **evel**, that **unhappen**

glette,

The **venym** and the vilany and the **vycios**
fylthe

That **bysulpes** manes saule in **unsounde**
herte,

576 That he his Saviour ne see with sight of his
iyen.

Thus all **illes** He hates as helle that **stynkes**,
Bot non nyes Him, on night ne never upon
dayes,

As **harlottrye dishonest**, hethyng of selven.

580 That **schames** for no **schrewedschyp**, **schent**
mot he **worthe**!

Bot **savour**, man, in thyself, thagh thou a
sotte lyve,

Thagh thou bere thyself babel, **bithenk thee**
sumtyme

Whether He that stykked uch a **stare** in uche
stepe iye,

584 If Himself be born blynde, hit is a brod
wonder.

And He that **fetly** in face fettled all eres,
If He has losed the **lysten**, hit lyftes
mervayle.

Trowe thou never that tale, untrue thou hit
fyndes.

588 There is no dede so **derne** that **dittes** His
iyen.

There is no wye in his werk so ware ne so
stille

That hit ne throwes to Him thro ere he hit
thoght have.

For He is the **gropande** God, the ground of
all dedes,

592 **Rypande** of uch a renk the reynyes and herte.

And there He fyndes all fayr a freke
withinne,

That hert honest and hole, that hathel He
honoures,

Sendes him a sad sight, to see His owne face,
596 And hard honyses these other and of His erde
flemes.

Bot of the dome of the douth for dedes of
schame,

He is so scoymus of that scathe He **scarres**
bylive.

He may not drye to draw **allyt** bot drepes in
haste;

600 And that was schewed schortly by a scathe
ones.

OLD Abraham in erde ones he sittes

Even before his house dor, under an **oke**
grene.

Bryght blykked the bem of the brod heven;

604 In the high hete thereof Abraham bides.

He was **schunt** to the **shadow** under shyre

leves.

Then was he ware on the way of wlonk wyes
thrynne;

If thay were **farande** and fre and fayr to
beh**olde**

608 Hit is ful ethe to leve by the last ende.

For the lede that there lay the leves anunder,
When he had of hem sight, he hyes bylive,
And as to God the **goodman** gos hem agaynes

612 And haylsed hem in **onhede**, and sayd:
‘**Hende** Lorde,

‘If ever thy man upon mold merit disserved,
Leng a little with thy lede, I **lowly** beseche.
Passe never fro thy pore, if I hit pray durste,

616 Ere thou has biden with thy burn, and under
boghe rested.

‘And I schal wynne yow wight of water a
little,

And fast aboute schal I fare your fete were
waschen.

Restes here on this rote and I schal reche
after

620 And bryng a morsel of bred to **banne** your
herte.’

‘Fare forth,’ quoth the frekes, ‘and fech as
thou segges.

By **bole** of this brode tre we bide thee here.’
Then orpedly into his house he hyed to Sare,

624 Comaunded her to be **cof** and quik at this
ones.

‘Thre **mettes** of mele **mengand ma kakes**;
Under **askes** ful **hot** happe hem bylive.
While I **fette sumwhat fat**, thou the fire bete
628 **Prestly** at this ilke poynt sum **polment** to
make.’

He cached to his **cow-house** and a calf
brynges
That was **tender** and not **togh**, bede tyrve of
the hyde,
And sayd to his servaunt that he hit **sethe**
faste;
632 And he derfly at his dome dight hit bylive.

The burn to be **bare-heved** buskes him
thenne,
Cleches to a clene cloth and castes on the
grene,
Threwe thryftyly thereon tho thre therve
kakes,
636 And brynges butter **withalle** and by the bred
settes.

Mete messes of **mylke** he merkkes bitwene,
Sithen **potage** and polment in **plater** honeste.
As sewer in a good assyse he served hem
fayre,
640 With sad semblaunt and swete, of such as he
hade.

And God as a glad **gest** made good chere,
That was fayn of his **frende** and his fest
praysed.

Abraham, all **hodles**, with armes up folden,
644 **Mynystred** mete before tho men that
myghtes all weldes.

Then thay sayden as thay sete samen all
thrynne,

When the mete was remued and thay of
mensk speken:

‘I schal eft here away, Abram,’ thay sayden,
648 ‘Yet ere thy lyves lyght lethe upon erthe.

‘And then schal Sare **consayve** and a son
bere,

That schal be Abrahames ayre, and after him
wynne

With wele and with worschip the worthely
peple

652 That schal holde in heritage that I have men
yarked.’

Then the burde **bihinde** the dor for **busmare**
laghed,

And sayd sothly to herself Sare the madde:

‘May thou trow for tykle that thou teme
moghtes! –

656 And I so high out of age, and also my lorde!’

For sothly, as says the Writ, hit were of sad
elde,

Both the wye and his wyf; such werk was
hem fayled.

Fro many a brod day before ho **barayn** aye
bileved,

660 That selve Sare withoute sede, into that same
tyme.

Then sayd our **Syre** there He sete: ‘Se, so
Sare laghes,

Not trowande the tale that I thee to schewed.
Hopes ho oght may be hard my handes to
worke?

664 And yet I avow verayly the **vaunt** that I
made.

‘I schal **yepley ayain** and **yelde** that I **hyghte**,
And sothly send to Sare a son and an ayre.’
Then swenged forth Sare and swer by her
trauthe

668 That for lote that thay **laused** ho laghede
never.

‘Now, inogh, hit is not so,’ then nurned the
Dryhtyn,

‘For thou laghed **alow**, bot let we hit one.’
With that thay ros up radly as thay **rayke**
schulde,

672 And set toward Sodomas her sight all at
ones.

For that city **therebyside** was set in a **vale**,
No **myles** fro Mambre mo then **twayne**,

Whereso woned this ilk wye that wendes
with our Lorde,
676 For to tent Him with tale and teche Him the
gate.

Then glydes forth God; the goodman Him
folwes:
Abraham heldes hem with, hem to **conveye**
In toward the city of Sodomas, that synned
had thenne
680 In the faute of this fylthe. The Fader hem
thretes,

And sayd thus to the segge that sued Him
after:
'How myght I **hyde** my hert fro Abraham the
true,
That I ne discovered to his corse my counsel
so dere,
684 Sithen he is chosen to be chef childeryn
fader,

'That so folk schal falle fro to **flete** all the
worlde,
And uch blod in that burn blessed schal
worthe?
Me bos telle to that **tulk** the tene of my wille,
688 And all myn **attlyng** to Abraham **unhaspe**
bylive.

'THE gret soun of Sodomas synkes to my
herte,

And the gylt of Gomorra gares me to **wrathe**.
I schal lyght into that lede and loke
myselfen

692 If thay have done as the dyn drives on lofte.

‘Thay haf lerned a **lyst** that likes me ille,
That thay haf **founden** in her flesch of fautes
the worste:

Uch male mas his mach a man as himselven,
696 And **fylter folyly** in fere on **females** wyse.

‘I compast hem a **kynde craft** and kenned hit
hem **derne**,
And **amed** hit in my **ordenaunce** **oddely** dere,
And dight **drury** thereinne, dole
altherswetest;

700 And the play of **paramores** I portrayed
myselfen, –

‘And made thereto a maner meriest of other:
When two true togeder had tyed hemselven,
Bitwene a male and his **make** such mirthe
schuld come,

704 Wel negh pure Paradise myght **preve** no
better,

‘Elles thay myght honestly ayther other
welde:

At a stille **stollen** steven **unstered** with
sighte,

Luf-lowe hem bitwene **lasched** so hote

708 That all the meschefes on mold myght hit not

‘Now have thay skyfted my skylle and
scorned nature,

And hentes hem in **hethyng** an **usage**
unclene.

Hem to smyte for that smod smartly I
thenke,

712 That wyes schal be by hem ware, world
withoute ende.’

Then arwed Abraham and all his mod
chaunged

For hope of the harde hate that hyght has
our Lorde.

All **sykande** he sayde: ‘Sir, with your leve,

716 Schal synful and **sakles** suffer all on payne?

‘Whether ever hit like my Lorde to **lyfte** such
domes,

That the wykked and the worthy schal on
wrake suffer,

And **weye** upon the **worre** half that wrathed
thee never?

720 That was never thy **won**, that wroghtes us
alle.

‘Now fyfty fyne frendes were founde in
yonde toun

(In the city of Sodomas, and also Gomorra),
That never lakked thy law bot loved aye
trauthe,

724 And **reghful** were and resounable and redy
thee to serve:

‘Schal thay falle in the faute that other frekes
wroghte,

And joyne to her **iuggement** her **juis** to have?
That **nas** never thy note – **unnevened** hit
worthe –

728 That art so gaynly a God and of gost mylde.’

‘**Nay**, for fyfty,’ quoth the Fader, ‘and thy
fayre speche,

And thay be founde in that folk of her fylthe
clene,

I schal **forgyve** all the gylt thurgh my grace
one,

732 And let hem **smolt** all **unsmyten** **smothely** at
ones.’

‘**A**, blessed be thou,’ quoth the burn, ‘so
boner and **thewed**,

And all holdes in thy hand, the heven and
the erthe!

Bot for I have tan up this **talk**, **tas** to non ille

736 If I mele a little more, that mul am and
askes.

‘What if fyve faylen of fyfty the **noumbre**,
And the remnaunt be reken, how restes thy
wille?’

‘And fyve wont of fyfty,’ quoth God, ‘I schal
for yete alle,

740 And **withholde** my hand fro **hortyng** on lede.'

'And what if forty be fre and **fauty** these
other,

Schalt thou schortly all **schende** and schape
non other?'

'Nay, thagh forty forfeite not, yet **fryst** I a
while,

744 And voyde away my vengauce, thagh me
vyl thinke.'

Then Abraham obeyed Him and highly Him
thonkes:

'Now, sayned be thou, saviour, so symple in
thy wrathe!

I am bot erthe ful **evel** and **usles** so blake

748 For to mele with such a mayster as myghtes
has alle.

'Bot I have begonne with my God and He hit
gayn thenkes;

If I **forloyne** as a **fol**, thy fraunchis may
serve.

What if thretty **thryvande** be **thrad** in yon
tounes,

752 What schal I leve of my Lord: if He hem lethe
wolde?'

Then the godlyche God gave him answare:

'Yet for thretty in **throng** I schal my thro
steke,

And **spare spakly** of spyt in space of my

thewes,

756 And my rankor refrayne for thy reken
wordes.'

'What for twenty,' quoth the tulk, 'untwynes
thou hem thenne?'

'Nay, yif thou hit yernes, yet yark I hem
grace:

If that twenty be true, I tene hem no more,

760 Bot relece all that regioun of her ronk
werkes.'

'Now, athel Lord,' quoth Abraham, 'ones a
speche,

And I schal schape no more tho schalkes to
helpe.

If ten trysty in toun be tan in thy werkes,

764 Wylt thou mese thy mod and mendyng
abide?'

'I grant,' quoth the grete God, 'Grant merci,'
that other.

And then arest the renk and raghte no ferre;
And God glydes His gate by those grene
wayes,

768 And he conveyen Him con with cast of his
iye.

And as he loked along thereas our Lord
passed,

Yet he cryed Him after with careful steven:

'Meke mayster, on thy man to mynne if thee

liked,

772 Loth lenges in yon lede, that is my lef
brother:

‘He sittes there in Sodomas, thy servant so
pore,

Among tho mansede men that haf thee much
greved.

If thou tynes that toun, tempre thyn ire

776 As thy mercy may malt thy meke to spare.’

Then he wendes his way wepande for care,

Toward the mere of Mambre, mournande for
sorwe,

And there in longing all night he lenges in
wones,

780 While the Soverayn to Sodomas sende to
spye.

HIS sonde into Sodomas was sende in that
tyme,

In that ilk eventide, by angeles twayne,

Mevande mekely togeder as mery men
yonge,

784 As Loth in a loge dor lened him alone,

In a porche of that place, pyght to the yates,
That was ryal and rich, so was the renkes
selven.

As he stared into the strete, there stoute men
played,

788 He saw there swey in asent swete men

twayne.

Bolde burnes were thay bothe, with
berdlesse chynnes,
Ryal rollande fax to rawe silk like,
Of ble as the brere-flour, whereso the bare
schewed;

792 Ful clene was the countenaunce of her cler
iyen;

Wlonk white was her wede, and wel it hem
semed;

Of all fetures ful fyne and fautlesse bothe:
Was non aucly in ayther for angeles hit were,
796 And that the yep underyede that in the yate
sittes.

He ros up ful radly and ran hem to mete,
And lowe he loutes hem to, Loth, to the
grounde,

And sithen soberly he says: ‘Syres, I yow
beseche

800 That ye wolde lyght at my loge and lenge
thereinne.

‘Comes to your knaves kote, I crave, at this
ones.

I schal fette yow a fatte your fete for to
wasche.

I norne yow bot for on night negh me to
lenge,

804 And in the mery morning ye may your way

take!’

And thay **nay** that thay nolde neghe no
houses,
Bot stilly there in the strete as thay stad were
Thay wolde lenge the long night, and **logge**
thereoute:

808 Hit was house inogh to hem the heven upon
lofte.

Loth lathed so longe with luflyche wordes,
That thay him granted to go and gruched no
lenger.

The bold to his byggyng brynges hem bylive,
812 That was ryally arayed, for he was rich ever.

The wyes were welcom as the wyf couthe;
His two dere doghteres **devoutly** hem
haylsed,
That were maydenes ful meke, maryed not
yette,

816 And thay were semely and swete and **swythe**
wel arayed.

Loth then ful **lyghtly** lokes him aboute,
And his men **amonestes** mete for to dighte:
‘Bot thenkes on hit be threfte, what thing so
ye make,

820 For with no sour ne no salt **serves** hem
never.’

Bot yet I wene that the wyf hit wroth to
dispite,

And sayd softly to herself: ‘These unsavere
hyne

Loves no salt in her sauce; yet hit no skylle
were

824 That other burn be boutē, thagh bothe be
nice.’

Then ho saveres with salt her sewes uchone,
Agayns the bone of the burn that hit
forboden hade.

And als ho skelt hem in scorne that wel her
skylle knewen.

828 Why was ho, wreche, so wod? Ho wrathed
our Lorde.

Then seten thay at the soper, were served
bylive,

The gestes gay and ful glad, of glam
debonere,

Welawynnely wlonk, til thay waschen hade,

832 The trestes tylt to the wowe and the table
bothe.

Fro the segges had souped and seten bot a
while,

Ere ever thay busked to bedde the burgh was
all uppe,

All that weppen myght welde, the wakker
and the stronger,

836 To umbe-lye Lothes house, the ledes to take.

In gret flokkes of folk thay fallen to his yates.

As a **scowt-wache** scarred so the **ascry** rised.
With kene klubbes of that clos they clater on
the woves,

840 And with a **schrylle** scharp **schout** they
schewe these wordes:

‘If thou lovies thy lif, Loth, in these wones,
Yete us out those yong men that **yore-while**
here entred,

That we may **lere** hem of luf, as our lyst
biddes,

844 As is the assyse of Sodomas to segges that
passen.’

What! They sputen and speken of so spitous
fylthe –

What! They yeyed and **yolped** of yestande
sorwe –

That the wynd and the weder and the worlde
stynkes

848 Of the **brych** that **upbraides** those
brothelyche wordes.

The goodman glyfte with that **glam** and
gloped for noyse.

So scharp schame to him schot he schrank at
the herte,

For he knew the **costoum** that kythed those
wreches.

852 He doted never for no doel so depe in his
mynde.

‘Allas,’ sayd him then Loth, and lyghtly he
rises,
And bowes forth fro the bench into the brode
yates.

What! he wonded for no **wothe** of wykkede
knaves

856 That he ne passed the **port** the **peril** to abide.

He went forth at the **wyket** and waft hit him
after,

That a clyket hit cleght **clos** him bihinde.

Then he meled to tho men **mesurable**
wordes,

860 For harlotes with his **hendelayk** he hoped to
chaste:

‘O, my frendes so fre, your fare is to strange!
Dos away your derf dyn and **deres** never my
gestes.

Avoy! hit is your **vilany**: ye **vylen yourselven**:

864 And ye are jolyf **gentylnen**, your japes are
ille.

‘Bot I schal kenne yow by kynde a craft that
is better.

I have a **tresor** in my **telde** of two my fayre
deghter,

That are maydenes **unmard** for all men yette:

868 In Sodomas, thagh I hit say, non **semloker**
burdes.

‘Hit are ronk, hit are ripe, and redy to

manne;

To samen with tho semely the solace is
better.

I schal biteche yow tho two that tayt are and
quoynte,

872 And laykes with hem as yow lyst, and letes
my gestes one.'

Then the rybaudes so ronk rerd such a noyse
That awly hurled in his eres her harlotes
speche:

'Wost thou not wel that thou wones here a
weye strange,

876 An outcomlyng, a carle? We kyllle of thyn
heved!

'Who joyned thee be justise, our japes to
blame,

That com a boy to this burgh, thagh thou be
burn riche?'

Thus thay thrubled and throng and threwen
umbe his eres,

880 And distresed him wonder strayt with
strenthe in the prece, –

Bot that the yong men so yep yornen
thereoute,

Wapped open the wyket and wonnen him
tille,

And by the handes him hent and heryed him
withinne,

884 And steken the yates stone-hard with

stalworthe barres.

Thay **blw** a buffet in blande that banned the
peple,

That thay **blustered** as blynde as **Bayard** was
ever.

Thay lest of Lothes **logging** any lysoun to
fynde,

888 Bot nyteled there all the night for noght at
the laste.

Then uch tulk tyght him that had of **tayt**
fayled,

And uchon rotheled to the **rest** that he reche
myghte.

Bot thay were wakened all wrong that there
in won lenged,

892 Of on the uglokest unhap ever on erde
suffred.

RUDDON of the **day-rawe** ros upon **ughten**,
When **merk** of the **mydnight** myght no more
laste.

Ful erly those angeles this hathel thay
ruthen,

896 And **glopnedly** on Godes **halve** gart him
upryse.

Fast the freke **ferkes** up, ful ferde at his
herte.

Thay comaunded him cof to **cach** that he
hade,

‘With thy wyf and thy wyes and thy wlonk
deghter,

900 For we **lathe** thee, sir Loth, that thou thy lif
save.

‘Kayre tite of this kyth, ere combred thou
worthe,

With all thy here upon haste, til thou a hille
fynde;

Foundes fast on your fete, before your face
lokes,

904 Bot bes never so bold to **blusch** yow bihinde.

‘And loke ye **stemme** no step, bot streches on
faste:

Til ye reche to a reset restes ye never.

For we schal tyne this toun and **traythly**
disstrye,

908 With all these wyes so **wykke** wightly
devoyde,

‘And all the londe with these ledes we losen
at ones:

Sodomas schal ful sodenly **synk** into
grounde,

And the grounde of Gomorra **gorde** into
helle,

912 And uch a cost of this kyth **clater** upon
hepes.’

Then lalede Loth: ‘Lord, what is the beste?
If hit me felle upon fote that I fle myghte,

How schuld I hyde me fro Him that has His
hate kynded,

916 In the brath of His **breth** that brennes all
thinges,

‘To **crepe** fro my Creator and knowe not
wheder,

Ne whether His **fooschip** me folwes before
other bihinde?’

The freke sayd: ‘No fooschip our Fader has
thee schewed,

920 Bot highly hevened thy hele fro hem that are
combred.

‘Now wale thee a **wonnyng** that thee **warisch**
myghte,

And He schal save hit for thy sake that has
us sende hider.

For thou art oddely thyn one out of this
fylthe,

924 And als Abraham thyn **em** hit at Himself
asked.’

‘Lord, loved He worthe,’ quoth Loth, ‘upon
erthe!

There is a city **here-biside**, that Segor hit
hatte;

Here-utter on a rounde hille hit hoves hit
one:

928 I wolde, if His wille were, to that won scape.’

‘Then fare forth,’ quoth that fre, ‘and fyne

thou never,

With those ilk that thou wylt, that threnge
thee after,

And aye goande on your gate withoute
agayn-tote,

932 For all this londe schal be lorne long ere the
sunne rise.'

The wye wakened his wyf and his wlonk
deghter,

And other two mery men tho maydenes
schuld wedde,

And thay token hit as tayt and tented hit
litle;

936 Thagh fast lathed hem Loth, thay **leyen** ful
stille.

The anges **hasted** these other and awly
hem **thratten**,

And **enforced** all foure forth at the yates:
Tho were Loth and his lef, his luflyche
deghter;

940 There soght no mo to **savement** of cities athel
fyve.

These anges had hem by hande out at the
yates,

Prechande hem the peril and bede hem passe
faste,

‘Lest ye be taken in the tech of **tyrauntes**
here;

944 Loke ye bowe now by bote: bowes fast
hence!’

And thay kayren hem con and kenely flowen.
Erly, ere any **heven-glem**, thay to a hille
come.

The grete God in His greme begins on lofte

948 To waken wederes so wyld: the wyndes He
calles,

And thay wrothly **upwafte** and wrastled
togeder,

Fro foure half of the folde flytande loude.

Cloudes **clustered** bitwene, casten up torres,

952 That the thik thunder-thrast **thirled** hem ofte.

The rayn rueled adoun, **ridlande** thikke,

Of felle flaunkes of fire and flakes of **soufre**,

All in smolderande **smoke**, **smachande** ful
ille,

956 Sweye aboute Sodomas and hit sides alle,

Gorde to Gomorra, that the grounde laused,

Abdama and Syboym – these cities all foure,

All birolled with the rayn, rosted and
brenned –

960 And ferly **flayed** that folk that in those fees
lenged.

For when that the Helle herde the **houndes**
of heven,

He was ferlyly fayn, unfolded bylive:

The grete barres of the abyne he **braste** up
at ones,

964 That all the regioun **to-rof** in **riftes** ful grete,

And **cloven** all in little cloutes the clyffes
aywhere,

As lause leues of the boke that lepes in
twynne.

The breth of the brynston by that hit blende
were,

968 All tho cities and her sides sunkken to helle.

Redles were tho grete routes of renkes
withinne

When thay were ware of the wrake that no
wye eschaped.

Such a yomerly yarm of yellyng there rised,
972 Thereof clatered the cloudes, that Cryst
myght have routhe.

The segge herde that soun to Segor that
yede,

And the wenches him with that by the way
folwed.

Ferly ferde was her flesch, that flowen aye
ilyche,

976 Trynande aye a high trot, that turne never
dorsten.

Loth and tho luly-white, his lefly two
deghter,

Aye folwed her face before her bothe iyen;
Bot the baleful burde that never bode keped

980 Blusched bihinde her bak that bale for to
herken.

Hit was lusty Lothes wyf that over her lyfte
schulder

Ones ho blusched to the burgh; bot bode ho
no lenger

That ho nas stad a stif stone, a stalworth
image,

984 Also salt as any see – and so ho yet standes.

Thay slypped by and saw her not that were
her [samen-feres](#)

Til thay in Segor were set, and sayned our
Lorde;

With lyght [loves uplyfte](#) thay loved Him
swythe

988 That so His servauntes wolde see and save of
such wothe.

All was dampned and done and drowned by
thenne.

The ledes of that little toun were lopen out
for drede

Into that [malscrande](#) mere, marred bylive,

992 That noght saved was bot Segor, that sat on a
[lawe](#),

The thre ledes therinne, Loth and his
deghter, –

For his make was myst, that on the mount
lenged,

In a [stonen](#) statue that salt [savour](#) habbes,

996 For two fautes that the fol was founde in
[mistrauthe](#):

One, ho served at the soper salt before
Dryhtyn,

And sithen ho blusched her bihinde, thagh

her forbidden were.

For one ho standes a stone, and salt for that
other,

1000 And all lyst on her **lik** that are on **launde**
bestes.

Abraham ful erly was up on the morne,
That all night much nye had **nomen** in his
herte,

All in longing for Loth leyen in a **wache**;
1004 There he laft had our Lord he is on lofte
wonnen.

He sende toward Sodomas the sight of his
iyen,

That ever had ben an erde of erthe the
swettest,

As aparaunt to Paradise that **planted** the
Dryhtyn;

1008 Now is hit plunged in a pit like of **pich** fylled.

Such a **rothun** of a reche ros fro the blake,
Askes up in the **ayre** and usles there flowen,
As a fornes ful of flot that upon fire **boyles**,

1012 When bryght brennande **brondes** are **bette**
there-anunder.

This was a vengauce **violent** that voyded
these places,

That **founded** has so fayr a folk and the
folde sunkken.

There fyve cities were set now is a see called,

1016 That aye is drovy and dym and ded in hit
kynde,

Blo, **blubrande** and blak, unblythe to neghe,
As a stynkande **stanc** that stryede synne,
That ever of smelle and of smach **smart** is to
fele.

1020 Forthy the **derk** Dede See hit is demed
evermore, –

For hit dedes of deth duren there yette,
For hit is brod and **bothomles**, and **bitter** as
the **galle**,
And noght may leng in that **lake** that any lif
beres,

1024 And all the costes of kynde hit **combres**
uchone:

For lay thereon a lump of **led** and hit on loft
fletes,
And folde thereon a lyght **fyther** and hit to
founs synkes;
And there water may **walter** to **wete** any
erthe

1028 **Schal** never grene thereon grow, gresse ne
wode nauther;

If any schalk to be schent were schowved
thereinne,
Thagh he bode in that bothom brothely a
monyth,
He most aye lyve in that logh, in **losyng**

evermore,

1032 And never drye no deth to dayes of ende.

And as hit is **corsed** of kynde and hit costes
alse,

The **clay** that clenges thereby are corsyes
stronge,

As alum and alkaran that **angre** are bothe,
1036 Soufre **sour** and saundyver, and other such
mony.

And there waltes of that water in **wax-lokes**
grete

The **spumande** asfaltoun that **spyseres sellen**.

And such is all the **soyle** by that see halves,
1040 That **felle fretes** the flesch and **festeres** bones.

And there are tres by that terne of traytours
kynde,

And thay borgounes and beres blomes ful
fayre,

And the fayreste fruyt that may on folde
growe,

1044 As **orenge** and other fruyt and apple-garnade,

Also red and so **ripe** and richely **hued**

As any dome myght devise of dayntytes oute;
Bot when hit is brused or broken or biten in
twynne,

1048 No worldes good hit withinne bot
wyndowande asks.

All these are teches and tokenes to trow

upon yette,

And **wittnesse** of that wykked werk and the
wrake after

That our Fader forferde for fylthe of those
ledes.

1052 Then uch wye may wel wit that He the
wlonk loves.

And if He loves clene **layk** that is our Lord
riche,

And to be **couth** in His court thou **coveytes**
thenne,

To see that semely in sete and His swete
face,

1056 Clerer counsel **con** I non bot that thou clene
worthe.

For Clopyngnel in the compas of his clene
Rose,

There he expounes a speche to him that
spede wolde

Of a lady to be loved: 'Loke to her sone,

1060 Of wich **berying** that ho be and wich ho best
loves:

And be right such in uch a burgh, of body
and of dedes,

And folw the fete of that fere that thou fre
holdes;

And if thou workes on this wyse, thagh ho
wykke were,

1064 Her schal **like** that layk that **lyknes** her **tille**.'

If thou wil dele drury with the Dryhtyn
thenne,
And lelly lovy thy Lord and His lef worthe,
Then **confourme** thee to Cryst, and thee
clene make,

1068 That ever is polysed as playn as the perle
selven.

For loke, fro first that He lyght withinne the
lel mayden,
By how comly a cast He was clos there,
When venquyst was no vergynyte ne
vyolence maked,

1072 Bot much clener was her **corse**, God **kynned**
thereinne;

And eft when He born was in Bethelen the
riche,
In wich **purYTE** thay departed, thagh thay
pore were:
Was never so blysfyl a bour as was a **bos**
thenne,

1076 Ne no **schroude** house so schene as a **schepon**
there, –

Ne non so glad under God as ho that grone
schulde.

For there was **seknesse** all **sounde** that
sarrest is holden,

And there was rose reflowr where rot has ben
ever, –

1080 And there was solace and song where sorw

has aye cryed:

For angeles with **instrumentes** of organes and
pipes,

And ryal **ryngande rotes** and the reken
fythel,

And all hende that honestly myght an hert
glade

1084 Aboute my Lady was lent, when ho **deliver**
were.

Then was her blythe barn burnist so clene
That both the ox and the asse Him **hered** at
ones:

Thay knewe Him by His clannes for Kyng of
nature,

1088 For non so clene of such a **clos** com never ere
thenne.

And if clanly He then com, ful cortays
thereafter,

That all that longed to luther ful **lodly** He
hated:

By nobleye of His **nurture**, He nolde never
touche

1092 Oght that was **ungoderly** or **ordure** was **inne**.

Yet comen lodly to that lede, – as **lazares**
mony,

Summe **lepre**, summe **lome**, and **lomerande**
blynde,

Poysened and **parlatyk**, and pined in fires,

1096 Drye folk, and ydropike, and dede at the
laste.

Alle called on that cortayse and claymed His
grace;

He heled hem with hende speche of that thay
ask after:

For whatso He touched also tite turned to
hele,

1100 Wel clener then any craft couthe devise.

So hende was His hondelyng uch ordure hit
schonied,

And the gropyng so good of God and man
bothe

That, for fetyse of His fyngres, fonded He
never

1104 Nauther to cout ne to kerve with knyfe
with egge:

Forthy brek He the bred blades withouten,
For hit ferde freloker in fete in His fayre
hande,

Displayed more pryvyly when He hit part
schulde,

1108 Then all the toles of Tolouse myght tyght hit
to kerve.

Thus is He curious and clene that thou His
court asks:

How schuld thou come to His kyth bot if
thou clene were?

Now are we sore and synful and souly
uchone:

1112 How schuld we see then, may we say, that
Syre upon throne?

Yis, that Mayster is **mercya**ble, thagh thou be
man **fenny**

And all **to-marred** in **myre** while thou on
molde lyves:

Thou may **schine** thurgh **schryfte**, thagh thou
has **schame served**,

1116 And **pure** thee with penaunce til thou a perle
worthe.

Perle praysed is pris there perre is schewed,
Thagh hit not derrest be demed to dele for
penies;

What may the cause be called bot for her
clene hues,

1120 That wynnes worschip above all white
stones?

For ho schines so schyre that is of **schap**
rounde,

Withoute **faut** other fylthe, if ho fyne were,
And wax ho ever in the worlde in **weryng** so
olde,

1124 Yet the perle payres not, while ho in pece
lastes.

And if hit cheve the **chaunce** **uncheryst** ho
worthe,

That ho **blyndes** of ble in bour there ho
lygges,

No bot wasch her with worschip, in wyne as
ho askes,

1128 Ho by kynde schal **becom** clerer then ere.

So if folk be defowled by **unfre** chaunce,
That he be sulped in saule, seche to schryfte,
And he may **polyce** him at the prest, by
penaunce taken,

1132 Wel bryghter then the beryl or braydene
perles.

Bot war thee wel, if thou be waschen with
water of schryfte,
And polysed as playn as **parchemen** schaven,
Sulp no more then in synne thy saule
thereafter;

1136 For then thou Dryhtyn displeses with dedes
ful sore, –

And entyses Him to tene more traythly then
ever,

And wel **hatter** to hate then had thou not
waschen:

For when a saule is saghtled and **sakred** to
Dryhtyn,

1140 He holly holdes hit His and have hit He
wolde.

Then eft **lastes** hit likkes, He loses hit ille,
As hit were **rafte** with **unryght** and **robbed**

with thewes.

War thee then for the wrake: His wrath is
achaufed

1144 For that that ones was His schuld eft be
unclene.

Thagh hit be bot a **bassyn**, a **bolle** or a **scole**,
A **dysche** other a **dubler** that Dryhtyn ones
served,

To **defowle** hit ever upon folde fast He
forbedes:

1148 So is He scoymus of scathe that **skylful** is
ever.

And that was **bared** in Babyloyn in Baltazar
tyme,

How hard unhap there him **hent**, and hastily
sone,

For he the vesselles avyled that vayled in the
temple

1152 In servyce of the Soverayn sumtyme before.

If ye wolde **tyght** me a **tom**, **telle** hit I wolde,
How charged more was his chaunce that
hem **cherisch** nolde

Then his **fader** forloyne that feched hem with
strenthe

1156 And robbed the **relygioun** of **relykes** alle.

III

DANIEL in his **dialokes** devised sumtyme,
As yet is proved expresse in his **profecies**,

How the gentryse of Juise and Jerusalem the
riche

1160 Was disstryed with distresse and drawen to
the erthe.

For that folk in her fayth was founden
untrue,

That had hyght the highe God to hold of Him
ever,

And He hem halwed for His and help at her
nede

1164 In muckel meschefes many and mervayl to
here.

And thay forloyne her fayth and folwed
other goddes:

And that wakened His wrath, and wrast hit
so highe

That He fylsened the faythful in the false
lawe

1168 To forfare the false in the fayth true.

Hit was sene in that sythe that Zedechyas
rengned

In Judee, that justised the Juyne kynges;

He sat on Salomones solie on solemne wyse,

1172 Bot of leaute he was late to his Lorde hende.

He used abominaciones of idolatrye,

And let lyght by the law that he was lege
tille;

Forthy our Fader upon folde a foman him

wakened:

1176 Nabugo de nozar nyed him swithe.

He **pursued** into Palastyn with proude men
mony,

And there he wasted with **werre** the wones
of **thorpes**;

He heryed up all Israel and hent of the beste,

1180 And the gentylest of Judee in Jerusalem
biseged,

Umbe-walt all the **walles** with wyes ful
stronge,

At uch a dor a doghty duk, and dit hem
withinne;

For the burgh was so **bigge baytayled** alofte,

1184 And stuffed withinne with stout men to stalle
hem thereoute.

Then was the sege set the city aboute;

Skete skarmoch skelt, much scathe was
lached,

At uch **brygge** a berfray, on **basteles** wyse,

1188 That seven sythe uch a day **asayled** the yates.

True tulkes in **towres teveled** withinne,

In **big** brutage of **borde bulde** on the walles.

Thay fyght and thay **fende** of and fylter
togeder,

1192 Til two yere **overtorned**, yet toke thay hit
never.

At the last upon long tho ledes withinne

Fast fayled hem the fode, **enfamined** mony:
The hote hunger withinne hurt hem wel
sarre

1196 Then any **dint** of that douth that dwelled
thereoute.

Then were tho routes redles in tho riche
wones:

Fro that mete was myst, **megre** thay waxed,
And thay stoken so strayt that thay ne **stray**
myghte

1200 A fote fro that **forselet** to **forray** no godes.

Then the kyng of the kyth a counsel him
takes

With the best of his burnes a **blench** for to
make:

Thay stel out on a stille night ere any steven
rised,

1204 And hard **hurles** thurgh the oste ere enmies
hit wyste.

Bot ere thay **atwappe** ne myght the wache
withoute,

Highe skelt was the ascry the skues anunder:
Loud alarom upon launde **lulted** was thenne,

1208 Riche, ruthed of her rest, ran to her wedes:

Hard **hattes** thay hent and on horse lepes,
Cler **claryoun crak** cryed on lofte;

By that was all on a hepe hurlande swithe,
1212 Folwande that other flot, – and founde hem

bylive:

Overtok hem as tite, **tult** hem of sadeles,
Til uch prince had his pere put to the
grounde;

And there was the kyng caght with Caldee
princes,

1216 And all his gentyle **forjusted** on Jerico
playnes.

And **presented** were as **presoners** to the
prince richest:

Nabugo de nozar **noble** in his chayer, –
And he the faynest freke that he his fo hade,

1220 And speke spitously hem to and spylt hem
thereafter.

The kynges sunes in his sight he **slow**
everuchone,

And **holkked** out his owne iyen heterly
bothe,

And bede the burn to be broght to Babyloyn
the riche,

1224 And there in doungeoun be done to drye there
his wyrdes.

Now se, so the Soverayn set has His wrake!
Nas hit not for Nabugo, ne his noble nauther,
That other depryved was of pryde with
paynes ful stronge,

1228 Bot for his beryng so **badde** agayns his blythe
Lorde.

For, had the Fader ben his frende, that him
before keped,
Ne never trespass to Him in tech of
[mysseleve](#),
To colde were all Caldye and kythes of Ynde,
1232 Yet take Torkye hem with, – her tene had ben
little.

Yet nolde never Nabugo this ilke note leve
Ere he had [tyrved](#) this toun and torne hit to
grounde:
He joined unto Jerusalem a gentyl duk
thenne –
1236 His name was Nabuzardan – to [noye](#) the Jues.

He was mayster of his men and myghty
himselven,
The [chef](#) of his [chevalry](#) his chekkes to make.
He brek the [barers](#) as bylive, and the burgh
after,
1240 And entres in ful [ernestly](#) in ire of his herte.

What, the [maystery](#) was [mene](#)! – the men
were awaye:
The best bowed with the burn that the burgh
yemed;
And tho that biden were so biten with the
[bale-hunger](#)
1244 That on [wyf](#) had ben worth the [weliest](#) foure.

Nabuzardan noght forthy nolde not spare,
Bot bede all to the [bronde](#) under bare egge.

Thay slowen of swettest **semlyche** burdes,
1248 Bathed barnes in blod and her **brayn** spyllid.

Prestes and **prelates** thay presed to dethe,
Wyves and wenches her wombes to-korven,
That her boweles out **borst** aboute the
diches,
1252 And all was carfully kylled that thay cach
myghte.

And all that **swypped unswolwed** of the
sworde kene,
Thay were cagged and caght on capeles all
bare,
Festned fettres to her fete under fole
wombes,
1256 And **brothely** broght to Babyloyn, there bale
to suffer, –

To **sitte** in **servage** and **syt**, that sumtyme
were gentyle:
Now are chaunged to chorles and charged
with werkes,
Both to kayre at the kart and the **kuy** mylke,
1260 That sumtyme sat in her sale, syres and
burdes.

And yet Nabuzardan nyl never **stynte**,
Ere he to the temple tee with his tulkes alle,
–
Betes on the barers, brestes up the yates,
1264 Slowen all at a **slyp** that served thereinne.

Pulden prestes by the polle and plat of her
hedes,
Dighten dekenes to deth, dungen doun
clerkes,
And all the maydenes of the
mynster maghtyly hem kyllen,
1268 With the swayf of the sworde that swolwed
hem alle.

Then ran thay to the relykes as robbores
wylde,
And pyled all the apparement that pented to
the kyrke:
The pure pyleres of brasse, portrayed in
golde,
1272 And the chef chaundeler, charged with the
lyghte, –

That bere the lamp upon loft that lemed
evermore
Before the *sancta sanctorum*, there selcouth
was ofte;
Thay caght away that candelstik, and the
crowne also
1276 That the auter had upon of athel gold riche,
–

The gredirne, and the goblotes garnyst of
sylver,
The bases of the bryght postes, and bassynes
so schyre,
Dere disches of gold and dubleres fayre,

1280 The **vyoles** and the **vesselment** of **vertuous**
stones:

Now has Nabuzardan nomen all these noble
thinges

And pyled that precious place and **pakked**
those godes, –

The gold of the gazafylace to swythe gret
noubre,

1284 With all the **ornementes** of that house, he
hamppred togeder:

All he spoyled **spitously** in a sped while
That Salomon so many a sad yere soghte to
make, –

With all the quoyntyse that he couthe clene
to worke

1288 Devised he the vesselment, the vestures
clene:

With **sleght** of his syences his Soverayn to
love

The house and the **anournamentes** he
hyghtled togeder.

Now has Nabuzardan nomen hit all samen,

1292 And sithen bete down the burgh and brend
hit in askes.

Then with legiounes of ledes over londes he
rides,

Heryes of Israel the hyrnes aboute;

With chargede **chariotes**, the cheftayn he

fyndes,

1296 **Bikennes** the **catel** to the kyng that he caght
hade, –

Presented him the presoneres in pray that
thay token:

Mony a worthely wye, while her world
lasted,

Mony a semely syre son and swythe rich
maydenes,

1300 The proudest of the **province** and prophetes
childer,

As Ananie and Azarie, and also Mighael,
And dere Daniel also, that was **devine** noble,
With mony a **modity** moder childe mo then
inoghe.

1304 And Nabugo de nozar makes much joye:

Now he the kyng has **conquest** and the kyth
wonne,

And dreped all the **doghtyest** and derrest in
armes,

And the lederes of her law layd to the
grounde,

1308 And the pris of the **profecie** presoners maked.

Bot the joy of the **juelrye** so gentyll and riche,
When hit was schewed him so schene, –
scharp was his wonder:

Of such **vessel** avayed that vayled so huge

1312 Never yet nas Nabugo de Nozar ere thenne.

He sesed hem with solemnete, – the Soverayn
he praysed

That was athel over all, Israel Dryhtyn:
Such god, suche gomes, suche gay vesselles

1316 Com never out of kyth to Caldee remes.

He trussed hem in his [tresorye](#), in a [tried](#)
place,

Rekenly with reverence, – as he right hade;
And there he wrought as the wyse, as ye may
wit hereafter,

1320 For had he let of hem lyght, him myght have
lumpen [worse](#).

That riche in gret [ryalty](#) reigned his lyve:
As [conquerour](#) of uch a cost, he [kayser](#) was
hatte,

[Emperour](#) of all the erthe, and also the
[saudan](#),

1324 And as the [god](#) of the grounde was [graven](#)
his name –

And all thurgh dome of Daniel, fro he
devised hade

That all godes com of God, and gave hit him
in samples,

That he ful clanly beknew his carp by the
laste,

1328 And oft hit [mekned](#) his mynde, his
maysterful werkes.

Bot all drawes to die with doel upon ende:

Be a hathel never so high, he heldes to
grounde;

And so Nabugo de nozar, as he nedes moste,
1332 For all his **empire** so high, in erthe is he
graven.

Bot then the **bolde** Baltazar, that was his
barn aldest,

He was stalled in his sted, and stabled the
regne,

In the burgh of Babyloyn – the biggest, he
trowed,

1336 That nauther in heven ne on erthe had no
pere.

For he began in all the glory that him the
gome **lafte**,

Nabugo de nozar that was his noble fader.

So kene a kyng in Caldye com never ere
thenne;

1340 Bot honoured he not Him that in heven
wones, –

Bot false fantummes of fendes, formed with
handes,

With **tole** out of hard tre, and telded on lofte;
And of stokkes and stones he stoute goddes
calles,

1344 When thay are **gilde** all with gold and gered
with sylver.

And there he **kneles** and calles and clepes

after helpe;

And thay reden him right, rewarde he hem
hetes, –

And if thay gruchen him his grace to **gremen**
his herte,

1348 He **cleches** to a gret **klubbe** and **knokkes** hem
to peces.

Thus in pryde and **olipraunce** his empire he
holdes,

In lust and in **lecherye** and **lothelyche**
werkes, –

And had a wyf for to welde, a worthilyche
quene,

1352 And mony a lemman never the later, that
ladies were called.

In the **clernes** of his concubines and curious
wedes,

In **notyng** of newe metes and of nice **gettes**,
All was the mynde of that man on
misschapen thinges,

1356 Til the Lord of the lyft lyst hit **abate**.

THEN this bolde Baltazar **bithenkes** him ones
To **vouche** an **avayment** of his vayne glory; –
Hit is not inogh to the nice all **noghty** thing
use,

1360 Bot if all the world wit his wykkede dedes.

Baltazar thurgh Babyloyn his banne gart
crye,

And thurgh the countre of Caldye his callyng
con sprynge,
That all the gret upon grounde schuld geder
hem samen

1364 And assemble at a set day at the saudans
feste.

Such a mangerie to make the man was
avised
That uch a kythyne kyng schulde come
thider,
Uch duk with his douth and other dere
lordes

1368 Schulde come to his court to kythe him for
lege, –

And to reche him reverence and his revel
herken,
To loke on his lemmanes and ladies hem
calle.

To rose him in his ryalty riche men soghte,
1372 And mony a baroun ful bold, to Babyloyn the
noble.

There bowed toward Babyloyn burnes so
mony,
Kynges, kayseres ful kene, to the court
wonnen,

Mony ledische lordes that ladies broghten,
1376 That to neven the noumbre to much nye
were.

For the burgh was so brod and so big alse,
Stalled in the fayrest sted the sterres
anunder,
Proudly on a plat playn, plek altherfayrest,
1380 Umbe-sweyed on uch a side with seven grete
wateres, –

With a wonder wrought wal, wruxled ful
highe,
With quoynt carneles above, corven ful
clene,
Troched towres bitwene, twenty spere
lenthe,
1384 And thikker throwen umbethour with
overthwert palle.

The place that plyed the poursent withinne
Was long and ful large and ever ilyche
sware,
And uch a side upon soyle helde seven myle;
1388 And the saudans sete set in the myddes.

That was a palayce of pryde, passande all
other,
Both of werk and of wonder and wal all
about, –
Highe houses withinne, the halle to hit
mede,
1392 So brod bulde in a bay that blonkes myght
renne.

When the terme of the tyde was touched of

the feste,
Dere drowen thereto and upon dese metten;
And Baltazar upon bench was busked to sete:
1396 Stepe stared stones of his stoute throne.

Then was all the halle flor hiled with
knightes,
And barouns at the side-bordes bounet
aywhere;
For non was dressed upon dese bot the dere
selven
1400 And his clere concubines in clothes ful
bryghte.

When all segges were there set, then servyce
begines:
Sturne trumpes strake steven in halle,
Aywhere by the woves wrasten out crakkes,
1404 And brode baneres thereby, blysnande of
golde, –

Burnes berande the bredes upon brode
skeles,
That were of sylveren sight, and sewes
therewith
(Lyfte logges thereover, and on loft corven,
1408 Pared out of paper, and poynted of golde),

Brothe baboynes above, bestes anunder,
Fowles in foler flakerande bitwene;
And all in asure and ynde enaumayld riche;
1412 And all on blonkene bak bere hit on hande, –

And aye the nakryne **noyse**, notes of pipes,
Tymbres and **tabornes** tulket **amonges**,
Symbals and sonetes sware the noyse,
1416 And bougounes **busch** **batered** so thikke.

So was served fele sythe the sale all aboute,
With solace at the sere course before the self
lorde,
There the lede and all his love langed at the
table;
1420 So fast thay weyed to him wyne hit warmed
his herte,

And **breythed** up into his brayn and **blemyst**
his mynde,
And all **waykned** his wyt, and wel negh he
foles;
For he waytes on wyde, – his wenches he
beholdes,
1424 And his bolde **baronage** aboute by the
wowes.

Then a **dotage** ful depe drof to his herte,
And a **caytif counsayle** he caght by
himselven:
Maynly his marschal the mayster upon
calles,
1428 And **comaundes** him cofly coferes to lause,

And fech forth the vessel that his fader
broghte,
Nabugo de nozar, noble in his strenthe,

Conquerd with his knightes and of kyrk
rafte,

1432 In Judee, in Jerusalem, in gentyle wyse.

‘Bryng hem now to my borde, of **beverage**
hem fylles, –

Let these ladies of hem lape; I lovy hem in
herte:

That **schal** I cortaysly **kythe**, and thay schyn
know sone

1436 There is no **bounte** in burn like Baltazar
thewes.’

Then touched to the **tresour** this tale was
sone,

And he with keyes **uncloses** kystes ful mony;
Mony **burthen** ful bryght was brought into
halle

1440 And covered mony a cupborde with clothes
ful white.

The jueles out of Jerusalem, with gemmes ful
bryghte,

By the side of the sale were **semely** arayed.
The athel auter of brasse was hade into
place,

1444 The gay **coroune** of gold gered alofte.

That had ben blessed before with bischopes
handes,

And with bestene blod busily **anoynted**
In the **solemne** sacrefyce that good savour

hade,

1448 Before the Lord of the lyft, in lovyng
Himselven,

Now is set for to serve Satanas the blake,
Before the bolde Baltazar, with bost and with
pryde.

Hoven upon this auter was athel vesselle,
1452 That with so curious a craft corven was wyly:

Salomon set him seven yere and a sythe
more,

With all the syence that him sende the
soverayn Lorde,

For to compas and cast to have hem clene
wroght.

1456 For there were bassynes ful bryght of brende
gold clere,

Enaumayld with asure, and eweres of sute;
Covered cuppes ful clene as casteles arayed,
Enbaned under batelment with banteles
quoynte,

1460 And fyled out of figures of ferlyly schappes, –

The coprounes of the covacles that on the
cuppe reres

Were fetysely formed out in fylyoles longe,
Pinacles pyght there apert that profert
bitwene;

1464 And all bolled above with braunches and
leves, –

Pyes and papejays portrayed withinne,
As thay proudly had piked of pomegarnades;
For all the blomes of the boghes were
blyknande perles,

1468 And all the fruyt in tho formes of flaumbande
gemmes:

And safyres and sardiners and semely topace,
Alabaundrynes and emerads and amatyst
stones,

Calsydoynes and crysolytes and clere rubies,
1472 Peritotes and pynkardines, aye perles
bitwene.

So trayled and trifled a-traverse were alle,
By uch bekyr and bolle the brurdes all umbe,
The goblotes of gold graven aboute

1476 And fyoles fretted with flowres and flyes of
golde.

Upon that auter was all aliche dressed;
The candelstik by acost was kayred thider
sone,

Upon the pyleres apyked that praysed hit
mony,

1480 Upon hit bases of brasse that bere up the
werkes:

The boghes bryght thereabove, brayden of
golde,
Braunches bredande thereon, and bryddes
there sete,

Of many kyndes, of fele kyn hues,
1484 As thay with **wynge** upon wynd had **waged**
her fytheres;

Inmong the leues of the launces lampes were
graythed,
And other luflyche lyght, that lemed ful
fayre, –
As many morteres of wax, merked withoute
1488 With many a borlych best all of brende
golde.

Hit was not wont in that won to **waste** no
serges,
Bot in temple of the traute truly to stande
Before the *sancta sanctorum*, there **sothefaste**
Dryhtyn
1492 Expounded His speche spiritually to special
prophetes.

Leve thou wel that the Lord that the lyft
yemes
Displeased much at that **play** in that plyt
strange,
That his jueles so gent with **javeles** were
fouled,
1496 That precious in His presense were proved
sumwhyte:

Soberly in His sacrefyce summe were
anoynted,
Thurgh the **somones** of Himself that sittes so

highe.

Now a **boster** on bench **bibbes** thereoffe
1500 Til he be dronken as the devel, and **dotes**
there he sittes.

So the **Worker** of this world **wlates**
therewith,

That in the poynt of her play He porvayes a
mynde;

Bot ere **harme** hem He wolde in haste of His
ire,

1504 He wayned hem a **warnyng** that wonder hem
thoghte.

Now is all this gere geten **glotounes** to serve,
Stad in a rich stalle and stared ful bryghte.

Baltazar in a **brayd**, 'Bede us thereoffe!

1508 Weye wyne in this won! Wassayl!' he cryes.

Swyfte **swaynes** ful swythe swepen theretille,
Kyppe cuppes in hand, kynges to serve;

In bryght bolles ful bayn **birlen** these other,

1512 And uch man for his mayster makes alone.

There was **rynging** aryght of riche metalles,
When renkes in that riche rok rennen hit to
cache,

Clatering of covacles that casten tho burdes,

1516 As **sonet** out of **sauteray** songen as mery.

Then the **dotel** on dese drank that he
myghte;

And then are dressed dukes and princes,

Concubines and knightes – bicause of that
mirth,

1520 As uchone had him in helde, he haled of the
cuppe.

So long likked these lordes these lykores
swete,

And gloryed on her false goddes and her
grace calles –

That were of stokkes and stones, stille
evermore:

1524 Never steven hem astel, so stoken is her
tonge.

All the good golden goddes the gaules yet
nevenen –

Belfagor and Belyal and Belssabub also –

Hered hem as highly as heven were thayres:

1528 Bot Him that all godes gives, that God thay
foryeten.

For there a ferly befel that fele folk sawen;

First knew it the kyng, and all the court
after.

In the palayce pryncipal, upon the playn
wowe,

1532 In contrary of the candelstik, that clerest hit
schined,

There apered a paume, with poyntel in
fynghes,

That was grysly and gret, and grymly he

wrytes –

None other forme bot a **fyste**, faylande the
wryste –

1536 Pared on the parget, portrayed lettres.

When that bolde Baltazar blusched to that
neve,

Such a **dasande** drede **dusched** to his herte
That all **falewed** his face and fayled the
chere;

1540 The strong stroke of the stounde strayned his
joyntes:

His knes caches to close and **cluchches** his
hommes.

And he with plattyng his paumes **displayes**
his lerns

And romyes as a **rad** ryth that **rores** for
drede,

Aye beholdand the hand til hit had all
graven,

1545 And **rasped** on the rogh wowe **runische**
sawes.

When hit the scrypture had scraped with a
scrof penne,

As a coltour in clay kerves tho forwes,

Then hit **vanist** verayly and voyded of sighte;

1549 Bot the lettres bileved ful large upon **plaster**.

Sone so the kyng for his care **carpyng** myght
wynne,

He bede his burnes bow to that were boke-
lered

To wayte the writ that hit wolde, and wyter
him to saye –

1553 ‘For all hit frayes my flesch, the fynGRES so
grymme.’

Scoleres skelten thereat, the skylle for to
fynde;

Bot there was never one so wyse couth on
word rede, –

1557 Ne what ledische lore ne langage nauther,
What tythyng ne tale, tokened tho draghtes.

Then the bolde Baltazar brayde ner wode,
And bede the city to sech segges thurghoute
That were wyse of wycheecraft, and warlowes
other

1561 That con dele with demerlayk and devine
lettres.

‘Calle hem all to my court, tho Caldee
clerkes;

Unfolde hem all this ferly that is bifallen
here,

And calle with a high cry: he that the kyng
wysses,

1565 In expounyng of speche that spredes in these
lettres, –

‘And make the mater to malt my mynde
withinne,

That I may wyterly wit what that writ menes

—

He schal be gered ful **gay** in gounes of
purpre,

1569 And a **coler** of cler gold clos umbe his throte;

‘He schal be **prymate** and **prince** of pure
clergy,

And of my thryvenest lordes the thrid he
schal **hatte**,

And of my reme the richest to ride with
myselven,

1573 Out-taken bare two, and tee he the thridde.’

This cry was up cast, and there comen mony
Clerkes out of Caldye that **kennest** were
knownen,

As the **sage** sathrapas that **sorsory** couthe;
1577 **Wyches** and walkyries wonnen to that sale,

Devinores of demerlaykes that dremes
couthe rede,

Sorsers of exorsismus, and fele such clerkes;
And all that loked on that **letter** as **lewed**
thay were

1581 As thay had loked in the **lether** of my lyft
bote.

Then cryes the kyng and kerves his wedes.
What, he corsed his clerkes and called hem
chorles;

To henge the harlotes he hyed ful ofte;

1585 So was the wye **wytles** he **wede** ful nere.

Ho herde him chyde to the **chamber** that was
the chef quene;

When ho was **wytered** by wyes what was the
cause,

1588 Such a chaungande chaunce in the chef halle,

The lady, to lause that losse that the lord
hade,

Glydes doun by the grece and gos to the
kyнге;

Ho kneles on the colde erthe and carpes to
himselven

1592 Wordes of worschip with a wyse speche:

‘Kene kyng,’ quoth the quene, ‘kayser of
erthe,

Ever laste thy lif into lenthe of dayes.

Why has thou rended thy robe for redles
hereinne,

1596 Thagh those ledes ben lewed lettres to rede?

—

‘And has a hathel in thy **holde**, as I have
herde ofte,

That has the gostes of God, that gyes all
sothes;

His saule is ful of syence sawes to schewe,

1600 To open uch a hid thing of aunteres
uncouthe.

‘That is he that ful oft has hevened thy fader

Of mony anger ful hot with his holy speche:
When Nabugo de nozar was nyed in
stoundes,

1604 He devised his dremes to the dere trauthe;

‘He kevered him with his counsayle of
caytiffe wyrdes;

All that he **spured** him in space he expounded
clene,

Thurgh the sped of the spyryt that **sprad** him
withinne

1608 Of the **godelest** goddes that gaynes aywhere.

‘For his depe **divinite** and his dere sawes,
Thy bolde fader “Baltazar” bede be his name,
That now is demed “Daniel of derne
connynges”,

1612 That caght was in the **captyvide** in countre of
Jues:

‘Nabuzardan him nome, and now is he here,
A prophete of that province and pris of the
worlde.

Sende into the city to sech him bylive

1616 And wyne him thee with worschip to **wayne**
thee bote.

‘And thagh the mater be **merk** that merked is
yonder,

He schal **declar** hit also cler as hit on clay
standes.’

That good counsayle at the quene was

cached as swythe;

1620 The burn before Baltazar was broght in a
while.

When he com before the kyng and clanly had
haylsed,

Baltazar [umbe-brayde](#) him, and, 'Beau sir,'
he sayde,

'Hit is tolde me by tulkes that thou true were
1624 Prophete of that province that [prayed](#) my
fader,

'And that thou has in thy hert holy
connynges,

Of [sapyence](#) thy saule ful sothes to schewe;
Godes gost is thee geven that gyes all
things,

1628 And thou [unhyles](#) uch hid that [heven-kyng](#)
[myntes](#).

'And here is a ferly befallen, and I fayn
wolde

Wit the wyt of the writ that on the wowe
clyves;

For all Caldee clerkes han [cowardely](#) fayled.

1632 If thou with quoyntyse [conquere](#) hit, I [quyte](#)
thee thy mede.

'For if thou redes hit by right and hit to
resoun brynges, –

First tell me the tyxt of the tede lettres
And sithen the mater of the mod mene me

thereafter –

1636 And I schal holde thee the hest that I thee
hyght have:

‘Apyke thee in purple cloth, palle
altherfynest,

And the bye of bryght gold aboute thy
nekke,

And the thrid thryvenest that thrynges me
after, –

1640 Thou schalt be baroun upon bench, bede I
thee no lesse.’

Derfly then Daniel deles these wordes:

‘Riche kyng of this regne, rede thee our
Lorde!

Hit is surely soth the Soverayn of heven

1644 Fylsened ever thy fader and upon folde
cherished,

‘Gart him grattest to be of governores alle,
And all the worlde in his wille, welde as him
likes:

Whoso he wolde wel do, wel him bitidde,

1648 And whos deth so he desyre he dreped as
faste;

‘Whoso him liked to lyft, on lofte was he
sone,

And whoso him liked to lay was lowed
bylive.

So was noted the note of Nabugo de nozar,

1652 Stifly stabled the regne by the stronge
Dryhtyn.

‘For of the Highest he had a hope in his
herte,
That uch power passed out of that Prince
even;

And while that was cleght clos in his herte,
1656 There was no man upon molde of myght as
himselven.

‘Til hit bitidde on a tyme touched him pryde,
For his lordeschyp so large and his lif riche:
He had so huge an insyght to his owne dedes
1660 That the power of the high Prince he purely
foryetes.

‘Then blynnes he not of blasfemy to blame
the Dryhtyn:
His myght mete to Godes he made with his
wordes:

“I am god of the grounde to gye as me likes,
1664 As He that high is in heven, His angeles that
weldes;

‘ “If He has formed the folde and folk
thereupone,
I have bigged Babyloyn, burgh altherrichest,
Stabled therein uch a stone in strenthe of
myn armes:

1668 Myght never myght bot myn make such
another.”

‘Was not this ilke word wonnen of his
mouthe

Ere then the Soverayn sawe souned in his
eres:

“Now Nabugo de nozar inogh has spoken:

1672 Now is all thy pryncipalte passed at ones,

‘ “And thou remued fro manes sunes on mor
most abide,

And in wasturne walk and with the wylde
dwelle,

As best bite on the bent of braken and erbes,

1676 With wrothe wolves to wone and with wylde
asses.”

‘In-myddde the poynt of his pryde departed he
there:

Fro the solie of his solemnete his solace he
leves,

And carfully is out cast to countre
unknawen,

1680 Fer into a fyr frith there frekes never comen.

‘His hert helded unhole: he hoped non other
Bot a best that he be, a bol or an oxe;

He fares forth on all foure, fogge was his
mete,

1684 And ete hay as a horse when erbes were
fallen.

‘Thus he countes him a kow that was a kyng
riche

While seven sythes were **overseyed** someres,
I trowe.

By that mony **thik** thye thryght umbe his
lere,

1688 That all was dubbed and dight in the dew of
heven;

‘Fax fyltered and **felt** flosed him umbe,
That sched fro his schulderes to his **schyre-**
wykes,

And twentyfolde **twynande** hit to his tos
raghte,

1692 There mony **clyvy** as clyde hit **clicked**
togeder;

‘His **berd ibrad** all his brest to the bare erthe,
His browes **bresed** as **breres** aboute his brode
chekes;

Holwe were his iyen and under campe
hayres;

1696 And all was gray as the **glede**, with ful
grymme **clawres**,

‘That were **croked** and kene as the kyte
pauue;

Erne-hued he was and all **overbrayden**, –
Til he wyste ful wel who wrought alle
myghtes

1700 And couth uch kyndom **tokerve** and **kever**
when Him liked.

‘Then He wayned him his wyt that had wo

suffred,

That he com to **knawlach** and kened
himselven.

Then he loved that Lord, and leved in
trauthe

1704 Hit was non other then He that had all in
hande.

‘Then sone was he sende agayn, his sete
restored;

His barouns bowed him to, blythe of his
come.

Hawerly in his own hue his heved was
covered;

1708 And so yeply was yarked and yolden his
state.

‘Bot thou Baltazar, his barn and his bold
ayre,

Saw these syngnes with sight and set hem at
little,

Bot aye has hoven thy hert agayns the highe
Dryhtyn,

1712 With bobbaunce and with blasfemy bost at
Him caste, –

‘And now His vesselles **avyled** in **vanyte**
unclene,

That in His house Him to **honour** were
hevened of firste:

Before the barouns has hem broght and
birled thereinne

1716 **Wale** wyne to thy wenches in waryed
stoundes;

‘Before thy borde has thou broght for
beverage in thede
That blythely were first blessed with
bischopes handes,
Lovande thereon lese goddes that lif haden
never,

1720 Made of stokkes and stones that never **styry**
myghten.

‘And for that **frothande** fylthe the Fader of
heven
Has sende into this sale these sightes
uncouthe,
The fyste with the fynGRES that flayed thy
herte,

1724 That rasped runischly the wowe with the
rogh penne.

‘These are the wordes here wryten, withoute
werk more,
By uch figure, as I fynde, as our Fader likes:
MANE, *TECHAL*, *PHARES*, merked in
thrynnne,

1728 That thretes thee of thyn unthryfte upon thre
wyse.

‘Now expoun thee this speche **spedly** I
thenke:
MANE menes as much as maynfulle Gode

Has counted thy kyndom by a clene noumbre
1732 And fulfylled it in fayth to the ferre ende.

‘To teche thee of *TECHAL*, that terme thus
menes

Thy wale regne is *walt* in weghtes to *henge*
And is founde ful *fewe* of hit fayth dedes.

1736 And *PHARES* folwes for those fautes, to
frayste the traathe.

‘In *PHARES* fynde I for sothe these felle
sawes:

Departed is thy pryncipalte, depryved thou
worthes,

Thy regne rafte is thee fro and raght is the
Perses,

1740 The Medes schal be maysters here, and thou
of menske schowved.’

The kyng comaunded anon to *clethe* that
wyse

In frokkes of fyne cloth, as forward hit asked.

Then sone was Daniel dubbed in ful dere
purpre

1744 And a coler of cler gold cast umbe his *swyre*.

Then was demed a *decre* by the duk selven:
Bolde Baltazar bede that him *bowe* schulde
The *comynes* all of Caldye that to the kyng
longed,

1748 As to the prince privyest preved the thridde,

Highest of all other, save **oneliche** twayne,
To bow after Baltazar in burgh and in felde.
This was cryed and knowen in court also
faste,

1752 And all the folk thereof fayn that folwed him
tille.

Bot **howso** Daniel was dight, that day
overyede:

Night neghed right now, with nyes ful mony;
For dawed never another day that ilke derk
after

1756 Ere **dalt** was that ilke dome that Daniel
devised.

The solace of the solemnete in that sale
dured,

Of that farande fest, til fayled the sunne.
Then blykned the ble of the bryght skues:

1760 **Mourkenes** the mery weder, and the mist
drives,

Thorgh the lyst of the lyft, by the low
medoes.

Uch hathel to his home hyes ful faste,
Seten at her soper, songen thereafter:

1764 Then foundes uch a **felawschyp** ferre at **forth-**
naghtes.

Baltazar to his **bed** with blisse was kayred:
Reche the rest as him lyst, he ros never
thereafter.

For his **foes** in the felde in flokkes ful grete,
1768 That long had layted that lede, his londes to
strye,

Now are thay sodenly assembled at the self
tyme:

Of hem wyste no wye that in that won
dwelled.

Hit was the **dere** Daryus, the duk of these
Medes,

1772 The proud prince of Perce and Porros of
Ynde,

With mony a **legioun** ful large, with ledes of
armes,

That now has **spied** a space to **spoyle**
Caldees.

Thay throngen thider in the **thester** on
throwene hepes,

1776 **Ascaped** over the **skyre** wateres, and **scayled**
the walles:

Lyfte **laddres** ful long and upon lofte
wonnen,

Stelen stilly the toun ere any steven rised.

Withinne an houre of the night, an **entre**
thay hade;

1780 Yet **afrayed** thay no freke; ferre thay passen,
—

And to the palayce pryncipal thay aproched
ful stille.

Then ran thay in on a res on routes ful grete:
Blastes out of bryght brasse brestes so highe;
1784 Ascry scarred on the skue, that scomfyted
mony.

Segges slepande were slayn ere thay slyppe
myghte;
Uch house heryed was withinne a hand-
while;
Baltazar in his bed was beten to dethe,
1788 That both his blod and his brayn blende on
the clothes.

The kyng in his cortyn was caght by the
heles,
Feryed out by the fete and foule dispysed,
That was so doghty that day, and drank of
the vesselle:
1792 Now is a dogge also dere that in a dich
lygges.

For the mayster of these Medes on the morne
rises,
Dere Daryus that day, dight upon throne;
That city seses ful sounde, and saghtelyng
makes
1796 With all the barouns thereabout, that bowed
him after.

And thus was that londe lost for the lordes
synne,
The fylthe of the freke that defowled hade

The ornementes of Godes house, that holy
were maked;

1800 He was corsed for his unclannes and cached
thereinne,

Done down of his **dyngnete** for dedes
unfayre,

And of this worldes worschip wrast out for
ever, –

And yet of lykynges on lofte letted, I trowe:

1804 To loke on our lovely Lord late bitydes.

Thus upon thynne wyse I have you thro
schewed

That unclannes **to-cleves** in **corage** dere
Of that **wynnelyche** Wye that wones in
heven,

1808 Entyses Him to be **tene**, teldes up His wrake;

And clannes is His comfort and quoyntyse He
loves,

And those that seme are and swete schyn see
His owne face.

That we gon gay in our gere that grace He us
sende,

1812 That we may serve in His sight, there solace
never blynnnes. Amen.



PATIENCE

Foreword

Patience is, like *Cleanness*, a poem whose structure – text followed by narrative *exemplum* [illustrative story] – is that of the homily or sermon. The text again comes from the Beatitudes, and the illustrative narrative from the Old Testament, though *Patience* confines itself to the single story of Jonah, and thus gains in focus and momentum, where the multiple stories of *Cleanness* make rather for shift and multiplicity of perspective. This time it is the last Beatitude that is taken as the base text: ‘Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake’ (Matthew 5:10). This is rendered in the poem as ‘Thay are happen ... that con her hert stere’ (27), which at once shifts the emphasis from martyrdom to emotional self-restraint, especially with regard to that passionate protest which, as the poem is keenly aware, is the instinctive response to anything that counters one’s will. But in the Latin of the Vulgate (the version of the Bible known in the poet’s day), the verb translated above as ‘are persecuted’ is *patiuntur*, which reveals why the Beatitude suggested itself as relevant to the etymologically related *patience*, announced as the subject of the poem in its opening word (as *cleanness* is in *Cleanness*). The English equivalent of the verb *pati*

was ‘to suffer’, and, though not used by the poet in his translation of *patiuntur*, that verb turns out to be of pivotal significance elsewhere in the prologue provided to the Bible story. Like *pati*, ‘suffer’ could in Middle English denote both the passive experience of hardship (‘undergo affliction’) and the active virtue of endurance and acceptance of it (‘exercise long-suffering, be patient’), and the logic of the Prologue depends partly on punning interplay between the two senses of the word. For on each of the two occasions on which it is used, it figures twice, once in the former sense, and once in the latter (see 5–6, 44–6): when one must ‘suffer = undergo pain’, it behoves one to ‘suffer = be patient’, for, if one does not, one merely suffers the more in the first sense. It is thus on prudential grounds, rather than on spiritual or moral ones, that the virtue is recommended, and the logic is wryly pragmatic: the poet points to the link created in the Bible between the last Beatitude and the first (‘Blessed are the poor’) by the fact that the same wording is used of the spiritual rewards the two categories of persons will enjoy (‘for theirs is the kingdom of heaven’), and claims to have experiential proof of the essential connection between the two – for he has himself been visited by poverty, and thus has no option but to ‘suffer’ (in both senses: 41–8).

The link into the story of Jonah is then provided by the hypothetical situation the poet describes in order to illustrate the wisdom of sufferance (patient acceptance) where suffering (disagreeable experience) is inevitable: if his lord were to command him to go to

Rome, there would be no point in complaining, for he would be forced to go anyway and would simply gain for himself the additional burden of his lord's displeasure (51–6). It is this specific and immediate point that the story of Jonah (who refused his Lord's command to go to Nineveh and as a consequence found himself transported thither in a whale's belly) is introduced as exemplifying (57–60), though it functions in a larger way also to exemplify the increased 'suffering' incurred by those who refuse to 'suffer' (5–6) and cannot 'stere' [control: 27] their passions.

But the narrower and more specific case dictates much of the emphasis in the poet's redaction of the Bible story – in two ways, in particular, the first of which has editorial consequences for the interpretation of specific lines (see notes to [320](#), [323](#) and [520](#)), while the second bears importantly on the question of the poet's own knowledge of biblical history and geography. The futility of resisting a powerful master is, of course, especially unarguable where that master is omnipotent and omniscient, as the poet stresses in a lengthy and early aside added to the Bible story (113–36) – a point also made in a number of incidental details, such as the contrast between a God who 'aye wakes' (130) and a prophet who needs to sleep and is repeatedly caught napping in undignified postures (186, 466). Their relative positions as *lord* and *man* are never lost sight of by either party to the relationship, as is evident in their modes of address and references to each other and to

themselves. God's address to Jonah as 'renk' (431), and later as 'renk' (490), 'we' (492) and 'man' (495), reminds him and us of his status; and Jonah, even in his anger addressing God as 'syre' (413) and 'Lord' (425), is ever conscious of their relative positions as master and man, if only to accuse God of abusing the relationship (482–3). His prayers in the whale are based precisely on his recognition of that relationship – 'Now, Prince, of thy prophete ... Thou art God ... Haf now mercy of thy man ... preve thee lyghtly a lord' (282–8) – and on his acknowledgement of God as 'Lord(e)' (305, 326; cf. 347) and of himself as a humbled 'man' or 'renk' ('To last mere of uch a mount, man, am I fallen': 320; 'Thou shalt releve me, renk': 323).

The other detail of the hypothetical situation, the displacement to a foreign city that the lord commands, is also underlined by the poet, who reinforces the link with Jonah's story (and God's command that he should take His message to the wicked city of Nineveh) by a number of small geographical references added to the Bible story. Assumptions about Jonah's location in the Old Testament world were based on a reference to a prediction about Israel made by 'Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher' (2 Kings 14.25). From this it was assumed that Jonah was a subject of the northern kingdom of Israel, not of the southern kingdom of Judah, and Gath-hepher was identified (correctly, as modern archaeology appears to establish) as a village in the northern district of

Galilee near to Diocaesarea, where, according to Jerome and others, the tomb of Jonah could be seen by travellers and pilgrims.¹ The poet's first addition places the story in Jewish territory generally: 'Did not Jonas in Judee such jape sumwhyle?' (57), 'in termes of Judee, / Jonas joyned was ... Gentyle prophete' (61–2). 'Judee' here refers, not to the southern kingdom of Judah (as opposed to the northern kingdom of Israel), but to Jewish territory as a whole – a loose sense of the term *Judaea* which was not uncommon and goes back to the Bible itself.² The contrast is with the 'Gentyle[s]' in general (62) and Nineveh in particular, which lay outside the 'termes of Judee' (Nineveh being situated in Assyrian territory, in what is now northern Iraq). The contrast thus creates an immediate equivalence between Jonah and the man hypothesized at 51–6 who is ordered to leave his own country for a distant city abroad (Rome). Subsequent geographical references, however, serve as more specific reminders of the homeland Jonah is displaced from. The Bible tells us that he attempted to flee God by taking ship at Japh, a port which lay on the border between the northern kingdom of *Israel* and the southern kingdom of *Judah*. It was most commonly associated with Jerusalem, which was in Judah, since it served as the port for that inland city. The poet, however, is obviously very much aware of Jonah's geographical co-ordinates, for he has him approach the port from Samaria, a district in the south of Israel, which is how an inhabitant of the northern kingdom would approach it. That it is Samaria he

departs from is a detail that obviously comes from and is addressed to awareness of Holy Land geography – an awareness (arising from pilgrim literature and/or pilgrim experience) which was more common then than now. It certainly shows a poet conscious of Jonah as a man hailing from the northern kingdom of Israel – a fact of which Jonah himself is equally conscious. When asked by the sailors who he is, he replies: ‘I am an Ebru ... of Israel borne’ (205). Most interestingly, he thinks of ideal mountain locations ‘in his kyth’ (462) to which he would like to transport his woodbine-bower, his mind turning to two mountain territories in the northern kingdom: Mount Hermon, in the north of Israel, and the mountainous ridge of Ephraim (which extended across the two kingdoms) to be seen in the south (‘Effraym or Ermonnes hilles’: 463). These additions to the Vulgate serve as reminders of Jonah’s geographical affiliations and so underline the dislocation the homesick prophet experiences as he dreams of that homeland while in an unknown city, a city to which the poet gives no locational specificity and which therefore comes across as completely off the mental map he creates for Jonah.

Such geographical specifics reflect how, for Jonah as for most people, identity and security are very much bound up with place – which explains why he instinctively resists his Lord’s command to leave his native land and go to Nineveh, just as it explains why the poet (in the Prologue) dreads the possibility of being sent to Rome by *his* lord. For, of course, that

specific situation – which begins as a hypothesis that introduces the Jonah story (49–58) – stands for the larger subject of suffering and powerlessness with which it is itself explicitly linked (47–8), and for the sense of alienation entailed in such suffering. Whether it invades one's home – as Dame Poverty is represented as doing, taking up residence in the poet's house as an unwanted guest (41–4) – or forces one out of a comfort zone into unknown territory, it turns the environment from a home to what feels like a habitat hostile to one's needs and habits.

These details of relationship and place in the story as the poet retells it are one aspect of a sympathetic and circumstantial adaptation which belongs within a rich tradition of medieval biblical paraphrase. Particularly relevant to *Patience* are the versification of the Book of Jonah in the English *Metrical Paraphrase of the Old Testament* (roughly contemporary with *Patience*) and the urbane twelfth-century Latin poem by Marbod of Rennes, *De Naufragio Jonae Prophetæ*. Both poems provide parallels for some of the poet's amplifications of the Bible; we cite some striking examples in our notes, as the matter is relevant to the level and amount of the poet's reading and learning. To this tradition also belongs the interest in the literal rather than the allegorical sense of the Old Testament story. Patristic reading of the Old Testament as foreshadowing the New had detected Christ and the Crucifixion in the narrative outline of this as of other biblical incidents: Jonah's emergence from the whale's belly after three days typified Christ's rising from the

dead on the third day after His death and descent into Hell. But the whale in this poem is an animal innocent of the sophistication that would equate him with the devil and Hell in any serious way. Analogies with the infernal occur only in their everyday role as colloquial emphatics – that is, to give force to some aspect of the literal situation: the whale's innards 'stank as the devel', producing for Jonah an abode 'that savoured as helle' (274–5). That these similes carry no allegorical significance is shown by the fact that the whale's jaws can be seen with equal ease, not as an entrance to Hell, but as the entrance to a cathedral (a house of God), as Jonah is sucked in 'As mote in at a mynster dor, so muckel were his chawles [jaws]' (268). The cathedral was the hugest building, and the mote [speck of dust] the smallest particle known to medieval man; and the simile serves to dramatize relative scale at the literal level. Typological comparison between Jonah and Christ had begun as early as the New Testament itself,³ but there is only one occasion in the poem on which an allusion to Christ can be detected with reference to Jonah – and here again the allusion is not allegorical in purpose or effect. Jonah, refusing to go to Nineveh as God commanded, reflects sullenly on his Master's grand unconcern for His prophet's safety:

'Our Syre sittes,' he says, 'on sege so highe
In His glowande glory, and gloumbes ful little
Thagh I be nomen in Ninive and naked dispoyled,
On rode ruly to-rent with rybaudes mony.' (93–6)

Jonah, living long before Christ, alludes unconsciously to the Crucifixion. This serves, of course, to give the

lie quite decisively to his accusation that God just sits in insulated pomp and leaves the dirty work to His prophets; history will disprove that alright. But the main point is of a more broadly comic rather than a serious nature. The contrast between the grandly tragic and willing self-sacrifice of Him who truly was 'On rode ruly to-rent' and the self-dramatizing self-pity of the cross prophet comically puts things back into proportion and reveals Jonah for what he is – a man whose understandable but un-Christlike fears for his own safety have undergone a certain hysterical escalation: he is not Christ and is not really in danger of such a death as He suffered; it is significant that his instinctively immediate fear is of imprisonment and rough treatment (77–80), death being assumed only in his subsequent sniffs of complaint against God, whom he represents as obviously not caring whether he lives or dies (83–4, 93–6).

If allegorical readings influenced the poet's handling of the story at all, they have thus re-emerged in such a way as merely to mark the telling distance between them and his own engagement with the literal aspects of the story. As is shown by the passage in *Cleanness* which spells out the moral significance of clothing in the Parable of the Wedding Guest (161–92), the poet could appreciate and use allegorical significance when it was to his purpose, but like most other medieval writers he is painstakingly explicit as to when and how he is doing so. So when Jonah's clothing is commented on, the point seems again to lie in the comically literal pertinence of the remark:

Then he swepe to the sonde in sluchchede clothes;
Hit may wel be that mester were his mantyle to wasche!
(341–2)

Though an echo of the logic in *Cleanness* has been detected, the remark gains its effect from a remorselessly unprim literalism: after three days in a fish's bowels, one is not looking or smelling one's sweetest, and the subsequent brine will have given but a crude laundering to the clothes of a man now cutting a very unpatriarchal figure as he lurches to shore. The moment takes its place in a pattern of cameos designed to capture Jonah in undignified and most decidedly unheroic postures as a result of his rebellion against God, in which he conceived himself acting so 'derfly' [boldly: 110]: drivelling in a snoring sleep (186), reeling head-over-heels down a slimy whale gut (269–72), *sluching* ashore (341–2), *baltering* [stumbling] about in senile glee under his woodbine (459–60).

The larger and more colourful ways in which the poet embroiders and expands upon the story at the literal level will be evident to all readers. But it is worth noting that his rationalizing interest in the events is evident even in less noticeable details:

Sone have thay her sortes set and sereelyche deled,
And aye the lote upon last lymped upon Jonas. (193–4)

This follows the Vulgate closely, except in the unobtrusive insertion of the words *sereelyche* [variously, on separate occasions] and *aye*: the seamen, the poet has obviously reflected, would have needed to be sure of the auguries before throwing overboard someone whose god might well be angered

rather than appeased if they get it wrong (cf. 225–8); and they therefore conduct the lot-casting more than once. There is another detail that provides a small but striking example of an attention to the literal level of the story that is nevertheless governed by a controlling moral direction:

... So blythe of his wodbynde he balteres thereunder,
That of no diete that day the devel half he roghte. (459–60)

The poet plainly noticed that the Vulgate omits to mention when and whether Jonah managed to find anything to eat in the couple of days he spent in the fields outside Nineveh; and he has used the omission to further his presentation of Jonah in this passage as being as recklessly excessive in his joy as he was earlier in his pain. The incident with the vine has thus been elaborated in such a way as to make of the story a diptych, a pair of matching pictures that add illustrative force to the closing admonition to be ‘patient in payne and in joye’ (525). We would not today think that *patience* would be relevant to one’s reaction to good as well as to bad fortune. But in fact over-elation at the one and over-reaction to the other were seen at this period as two sides of the same faulty lack of temperance and fortitude (see note to [525](#)), and the poet has shaped his material to illustrate this point and to draw from it precisely that moral.

A brief but beautifully crafted poem, *Patience* is, in a way, a more ‘perfect’ work even than *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, in the specific sense that it is one of those rare pieces in which no detail is random or unrelated to a discernible pattern of emphases and an

overall moral point. If it seems to make an obvious point, that is only because the poet makes it so well that it seems obvious, just as it seems simple only because the poem has so well integrated its material into single wholeness. The poem is never *simply* lively and concrete, for a felt moral purpose always informs the zest and imagination with which the poet shapes the biblical narrative into his own story – the story of how a rebellious prophet is set loose in a universe (of weather, animals and plants) obedient to its Creator and one that seems itself designed to demonstrate the wisdom of obedience and the trouble caused by the lack of it. And while this moral universe cruelly condemns Jonah's protests to inevitable futility and indignity, it is mercifully presided over by a Creator more capable than Jonah of 'suffering' offence (520–23).

Recommended Further Reading: Spearing 1970: 74–95; Schleusener 1971; Stokes 1983–4; Putter 1996: 103–146; Anderson 2005: 126–57

Patience

PACIENCE is a poynt, thagh hit displese
ofte,

When hevy hertes ben hurt with hethyng
other elles,

Suffraunce may **asuagen** hem and the
swelme lethe,

- 4 For houelles uch a qued and **quenches**
malyce.

For whoso suffer couth syt, sele wolde folwe;
And who for thro may not thole, the thikker
he sufferes.

Then is better to abide the bur **umbe-**
stoundes

- 8 Then aye **throw** forth my thro, thagh me
think **ille**.

I herde on a halyday at a highe Masse
How Mathew meled that his Mayster His
meyny con teche:

Aght happes he hem hyght and uchone a
mede

- 12 **Sunderlupes** for hit desert upon a sere wyse.

Thay are **happen** that haf in herte **poverté**,
For hores is the hevenryche to holde for
ever.

Thay are happen also that **haunte**
mekenesse,

- 16 For thay schal welde this world and all her
wille have.

Thay are happen also that for her harme
wepes,

For thay schal comfort **encroche** in kythes ful
mony.

Thay are happen also that **hungeres** after
righte,

- 20 For thay schal frely be refete ful of alle
goode.

Thay are happen also that haf in hert routhe,
For mercy in all maneres her mede schal
worthe.

Thay are happen also that are of hert clene,

- 24 For thay her Saviour in sete schal see with
her iyen.

Thay are happen also that holden her pese,
For thay the gracious Godes sunes schal
godly be called.

Thay are happen also that con her hert stere,

- 28 For hores is the hevenryche – as I ere sayde.

These are the happes all aght that us **bihyght**
were,

If we these ladies wolde **lov**y in **lyknyng** of
thewes:

Dame Poverté, dame Pyty, dame Penance
the thridde,

- 32 Dame Mekenesse, dame Mercy, and mery
Clannesse, –

And then dame **Pes**e and Pacience put in
thereafter.

He were happen that had one, all were the
better.

Bot syn I am put to a poynt that poverté
hatte,

- 36 I schal me **porvay** pacience and play me with
bothe.

For in the **tyxt** there these two are in **teme**
layde

Hit are fettled in on forme, the forme and
the laste,

And by quest of her **quoyntyse** **enquylen** on
mede;

- 40 And also in myn **upynyoun** hit are of on
kynde.

For thereas Poverté her **proferes** ho nyl be
put utter,

Bot leng wheresoever her lyst, like other
greme.

And thereas poverté **enpresses**, thagh man
pine thinke,

- 44 Much, maugre his **mun**, he mot nede suffer.

Thus Poverté and Pacience are nedes
playferes;

Sithen I am set with hem samen, suffer me
behoves.

Then is me lyghtloker hit like and her lotes
prayse

- 48 Then wyther with and be wroth and the
worse have.

If me be dight a destine due to have,
What dowes me the dedayn other dispit
make?

Other if my lege lord lyst on lyve me to
bidde

- 52 Other to ride other to renne to Rome in his
ernde,

What graythed me the gruchyng bot grame
more seche?

Much if he me ne made, maugre my chekes,
And then thret most I thole and unthok to
mede,

- 56 The had bowed to his bode, bongre my hyre.

Did not Jonas in Judee such jape sumwhyte?
To set him to seurte, unsounde he him
feches.

- Wil ye tary a little tyne and tent me a while,
60 I schal wysse yow therewith, as Holy Writ
telles.

HIT bitidde sumtyme in termes of Judee,
Jonas joyned was thereinne **Gentyle**
prophete;
Godes glam to him glod, that him **unglad**
made;

64 With a roghlych rurd rouned in his ere:

‘Ris **radly**,’ He says, ‘and rayke forth even.
Nym the way to Ninive withouten other
speche,

And in that city my sawes **soghe** all aboute,
68 That in that place at the poynt I put in thy
herte.

‘For iwysse hit are so wykke that in that won
dwelles,

And her malyce is so much, I may not abide,
Bot venge me on her vilany and venym
bylive.

72 Now sweye me thider swyftly and say me
this **ernde**!’

When that steven was stynt that stouned his
mynde,

All he wrathed in his **wyt** and **wytherly** he
thoghte:

‘If I bowe to His bode and bryng hem this
tale,

76 And I be nomen in Ninive, my nyes begynes.

‘He telles me those traytours are typede
schrewes;

I **tee** with those tithynges, thay ta me bylive,
Pynes me in a **prysoun**, put me in stokkes,
80 Wrythe me in a **warlok**, **wrast** out myn iyen.

‘This is a mervayl **message** a man for to
preche

Among enmies so mony and mansede fendes,
—

Bot if my **gaynlyche** God such gref to me
wolde,

84 For desert of sum sake, that I slayn were.

‘At all periles,’ quoth the prophete, ‘**aproche**
I hit no nerre;

I wil me sum other way that He ne wayte
after.

I schal tee into Tarce and tary there a while,
88 And lyghtly when I am lest he letes me
alone.’

Then he rises radly and raykes bylive
Jonas toward **port** Japh, aye **janglande** for
tene

That he **bolde** thole for no thing non of those
pines,

92 Thagh the Fader that him formed were **fale**
of his hele.

‘Our Syre sittes,’ he says, ‘on **sege** so highe
In His **glowande** glory, and **gloumbes** ful
little

Thagh I be nomen in Ninive and naked

dispoyled,

96 On rode **ruly** to-rent with **rybaudes** mony.'

Thus he **passes** to that port his **passage** to
seche,

Fyndes he a fayr **schip** to the **fare redy**,
Maches him with the maryneres, makes her
paye

100 For to **towe** him into Tarce as tite as thay
myghte.

Then he tron on tho tres, and thay her
tramme richen,

Cachen up the crossayl, cables thay fasten,
Wight at the wyndas weyen her ankres,

104 Spenned spak to the sprete the spare
bawelyne,

Gederen to the gyde-ropes, the grete cloth
falles;

Thay layden in on laddeborde and the lofe
wynnes:

The blythe breth at her bak the bosum he
fyndes, –

108 He **swenges** me this swete schip swyft fro the
haven.

Was never so joyful a **Jue** as Jonas was
thenne,

That the daunger of Dryhtyn so **derfly**
eschaped.

He wende wel that that Wye that all the

world planted

112 Had no myght in that mere no man for to
greve.

Lo, the wytlesse wreche! For he wolde not
suffer,

Now has he put him in plyght of peril wel
more.

Hit was a wenyng unwar that welt in his
mynde,

116 Thagh he were soght fro Samarye, that God
saw no ferre.

Yis, He blusched ful brode – that burde him be
sure.

That oft kyd him the carp that that kyng
sayde,

Dyngne David on dese, that demed this
speche

120 In a psalme that he set the Sauter withinne:

‘O foles in folk, feles otherwhile

And understondes umbe-stounde, thagh he
be stape in folly:

Hope ye that He heres not that eres all
made?

124 Hit may not be that He is blynde that bigged
uch iye.’

Bot he dredes no dint that dotes for elde,
For he was fer in the flod foundande to
Tarce.

Bot I trow ful tite overtan that he were,
128 So that **schamely** to schort he schot of his
ame.

For the **Welder** of wyt that wot alle thinges,
That aye **wakes** and waytes, at wille has He
sleghtes.

He called on that ilk craft He **carf** with His
handes.

132 Thay wakened wel the wrotheloker for
wrothly He cleped:

‘Ewrus and Aquiloun that on **est** sittes,
Blowes bothe at my bode upon blo wateres!’
Then was there no tom there bitwene his tale
and her **dede**,

136 So bayn were thay bothe two his bone for to
worke.

Anon out of the **north-est** the noyse begins
When bothe brethes con blowe upon blo
wateres;

Rogh rakkes there ros with **rudnyng**
anunder;

140 The **see soughed** ful sore, gret **selly** to here.

The wyndes on the **wonne** water so wrastel
togeder

That the wawes ful wode waltered so highe,
And eft busched to the abyme, that breede
fisches

144 Durst nowhere for rogh **arest** at the bothom.

When the breth and the brok and the bot
metten,
Hit was a joyles gyn that Jonas was inne:
For hit reled on rounde upon the rogh ythes.

148 The **bur** bere to hit **baft**, that braste all her
gere.

Then hurled on a hepe the helme and the
sterne.

First **to-murte** mony **rop** and the mast after;
The **sayl sweyed** on the see; then **suppe**
behoved

152 The **coge** of the **colde** water, and then the cry
rises.

Yet corven thay the **cordes** and cast all
thereoute;

Mony **ladde** there forth lep to **lave** and to
caste;

Scopen out the **scathel** water that fayn scape
wolde;

156 For be manes **lode** never so luther, the lif is
aye swete.

There was **busy** overborde bales to caste,
Her **bagges** and her **fetherbeddes** and her
bryght wedes,

Her kystes and her coferes, her **caraldes** alle,

—

160 And all to **lyghthen** that lome, if **lethe** wolde
schape.

Bot ever was ilyche loud the lote of the
wyndes,

And ever wrother the water and wodder the
stremes.

Then tho **wery forwroght** wyste no bote,

164 Bot uchone **glewed** on his god that gayned
him **beste**.

Summe to Vernagu there vouched **avowes**
solemne,

Summe to Diana devout and **derve** Neptune,
To Mahoun and to Mergot, the mone and the
sunne,

168 And uch lede as he loved and layd had his
herte.

Then **bispeke** the **spakest**, **dispayred** wel
nere:

‘I leve here be sum **losynger**, sum **laweles**
wreche,

That has greved his god and gos here among
us.

172 Lo, all synkes in his synne and for his sake
marres!

‘I **loue** that we lay lotes on ledes uchone,
And whoso **lympes** the **losse**, lay him
thereoute.

And when the gulty is gon, what may come
trowe

176 Bot He that rules the rak may **rue** on those
other?’

This was set in asent, and **sembled** thay
were,
Heryed out of uch **hyrne** to hente that falles.
A lodesmon lyghtly lep under hachches
180 For to **layte** mo ledes and hem to lote
brynge.

Bot him fayled no freke that he fynde
myghte
Save Jonas the Jue, that jowked in derne;
He was flowen for ferde of the flod lotes
184 Into the **bothom** of the bot, and on a **brede**
lyggede,

Onhelde by the hurrok, for the heven wrake,
Slypped upon a **sloumbe** slepe, and
sloberande he **routes**.
The freke him **frunt** with his fot and bede
him ferk uppe:
188 There Ragnel in his rakentes him rere of his
dremes!

By the haspe-stede unhende he hentes him
thenne,
And broght him up by the brest and upon
borde sette,
Arayned him ful runischly what resoun he
hade
192 In such slaghtes of sorw to **slepe** so faste.

Sone haf thay her **sortes** set and serelyche
deled,

And aye the **lote** upon last lympted on Jonas.
Then ascryed thay him skete and asked full
loude:

196 ‘What the devel has thou done, dotede
wreche?

‘What seches thou on see, synfulle **schrewe**,
With thy lastes so luther to lose us uchone?
Has thou, gome, no governour ne god on to
calle,

200 That thou thus slydes on **slepe** when thou
slayn worthes?

‘Of what londe art thou lent? What laytes
thou here?

Whyder in worlde that thou wilt and what is
thyn **ernde**?

Lo, thy dome is thee dight for thy dedes ille!

204 Do gif glory to thy God ere thou glyde
hence!’

‘I am an **Ebru**,’ quoth he, ‘of Israel borne.
That Wye I **worschip**, iwysse, that wrought
alle thinges,

All the world with the welkyn, the **wynd** and
the sternes,

208 And all that wones there withinne, at a word
one.

‘All this meschef for me is made at this tyme,
For I have greved my God and **gulty** am
founden.

Forthy beres me to the borde and bathes me
thereoute;

212 Ere gete ye no hap, I hope forsothe.'

He ossed hem by unnynges, that they
undernomen

That he was flowen fro the face of frelyche
Dryhtyn.

Then such a ferde on hem fel and flayed hem
withinne

216 That thay ruyt hem to rowe and letten the
renk one.

Hatheles hyed in haste with ores ful longe,
Syn her sayl was hem aslypped, on sides to
rowe,

Hef and hale upon hyght to helpen
hemselven;

220 Bot all was nedles her note: that nolde not
bityde.

In bluber of the blo flod bursten her ores.

Then had thay noght in her hand that hem
help myghte;

Then nas no comfort to kever ne counsel non
other

224 Bot Jonas into his juis jugge bylive.

First thay prayen to the Prince that
prophetes serven

That He gyve hem the grace to greven Him
never

That thay in **baleless** blod there blenden her
handes,
228 Thagh that hathel were His that they here
quelled.

Tite by **top** and by to thay token him sithen,
Into that lothelyche logh thay **luchen** him
sone.

He was no **tytter** out tylt that tempest ne
sesed;
232 The see saghtled **therewith** as sone as ho
myghte.

Then thagh her **takel** were **torne** that **totered**
on ythes,
Stiffe stremes and streght hem strayned a
while,
That drof hem drylych adoun the depe to
serve,
236 Til a **swetter** ful swythe hem sweyed to
bonke.

There was **lovyng** on loft, when thay the
londe wonnen,
To our mercyable Mayster, on Moyses wyse,
With sacrefyce up set and solemne **vowes**,
240 And granted Him one to be God and graythly
non other.

Thagh thay be jolyf for joy, Jonas yet dredes;
Thagh he nolde suffer no sore, his sele is on
aunter.

For **whatso** worthed of that wye, fro he in
water **dipped**,
244 Hit were a wonder to wene, if Holy Writ
nere.

II

NOW is Jonas the Jue jugged to **drowne**;
Of that schendede schip men schowved him
sone.
A wylde walterande **whal**, as wyrde then
schaped,
248 That was beten fro the abyne, by that bot
flotte,

And was ware of that wye that the water
soghte,
And swyftly swenged him to swepe and his
swolgh opened;
The folk yet **haldande** his fete the fische him
tite hentes;
252 Withouten **touch** of any tothe he tult in his
throthe.

Then he swenges and **swayves** to the see
bothom
By many rokkes ful rogh and ridlande
strondes,
With the man in his **mawe** malskred in
drede,
256 As little wonder hit was if he wo dried.

For nade the highe Heven-kyng thurgh His

hand-mighte

Warded this wrech man in warlowes guttes,
What lede myght leve by law of any kynde
260 That any lif myght be lent so long him
withinne?

Bot he was sokored by that Syre that sittes so
highe,

Thagh were wanles of wele in wombe of that
fissche,

And also driven thurgh the depe and in derk
walteres.

264 Lord, colde was his comfort and his care
huge!

For he knew uch a case and kark that him
lymped:

How fro the bot into the bluber was with a
best lached

And threwe in at hit throte withouten thret
more,

268 As mote in at a mynster dor, so muckel were
his chawles.

He glydes in by the giles thurgh glaymande
glette,

Relande in by a rop, a rode that him thoghte,
Aye hele over hed hurlande aboute,

272 Til he blunt in a blob as brod as a halle.

And there he festnes the fete and fathmes
aboute,

And stod up in his **stomak** that stank as the
devel.

There in **saym** and in sorw that savoured as
helle,

276 There was bylded his **bour** that wil no bale
suffer.

And then he **lurkkes** and laytes where was
lee the beste

In uch a **noke** of his **navel**, bot nowhere he
fyndes

No rest ne recoverer, bot **ramel** and myre

280 In wich **gut** soever he gos; bot ever is God
swete.

And there he lenged at the last and **to** the
Lede called:

‘Now, Prince, of thy prophete pyty thou
have!

Thagh I be **fol** and fykel and false of my
herte,

284 Devoyde now thy vengauce, thurgh **vertue**
of routhe.

‘Thagh I be gulty of gile, as galle of
prophetes,

Thou art God and all godes are graythly thyn
owne.

Haf now mercy of thy man and his
mysdedes,

288 And preve thee lyghtly a lord in londe and in
water.’

With that he **hit** to a hyrne and helde him
thereinne,

There no **defoule** of no fylthe was fest him
about.

There he sat also sounde – save for merk one –

292 As in the **bulk** of the bot there he before
slepte.

So in a **bowel** of that best he bides on lyve,
Thre dayes and the night, aye thenkande on
Dryhtyn,

His myght and His mercy, His mesure
thenne:

296 Now he knowes Him in care that couthe not
in sele.

And ever walteres this whal by **wyldrene**
depe,

Thurgh mony a regioun ful rogh, thurgh
ronk of his wille.

For that mote in his mawe made him, I
trowe,

300 Thagh hit little were him with, to **wamel** at
his herte.

And as sayled the **segge** aye **sikerly** he herde
The bigge borne on his bak and **bete** on his
sides.

Then a prayer ful prest the prophete there
maked;

304 On this wyse, as I wene, his wordes were
mony:

‘**LORD**, to thee have I cleped in cares ful
stronge.

Out of the hole thou me herde of **hellene**
wombe;

I **calde**, and thou knew myn **uncler** steven.

308 Thou diptes me of the depe see into the
dymme herte.

‘The grete **flem** of thy flod folded me umbe;
All the gotes of thy **guferes** and **groundelesse**
poles

And thy stryvande stremes of **stryndes** so
mony

312 In on **daschande** dam drives me over.

‘And yet I sayd as I sat in the see bothom:
Careful am I, cast out fro thy cler iyen
And **desevered** fro thy sight. Yet surely I
hope

316 Eft to **trede** on thy temple and teme to
thyselven.

‘I am wrapped in water to my wo-stoundes.
The abyeme byndes the body that I bide inne,
The pure poplande **hourle** playes on my
heued,

320 To last **mere** of uch a **mount**, man, am I
fallen.

‘The barres of uch a bonk ful bigly me
holdes,

That I may lache no londe, and thou my lif
weldes.

Thou shalt releve me, renk, while thy **right**
slepes,

324 Thurgh myght of thy mercy that muckel is to
tryste.

‘For when the **acces** of **anguych** was hid in
my saule,

Then I **remembred** me **right** of my rich
Lorde,

Prayande Him for pyty His prophete to **here**,
328 That into His holy house myn **orisoun** myght
enter.

‘I have **meled** with thy maystres mony longe
daye,

Bot now I wot wyterly that those **unwyse**
ledes

That **affyen** hem in vanyte and in **vayne**
thinges

332 For thing that **mountes** to noght her mercy
forsaken.

‘Bot I devoutly **avow** that **veray** bes holden,
Soberly to do thee sacrefyce, when I schal **saf**
worthe,

And **offer** thee for my hele a ful hole gifte,
336 And hold good that thou me hetes: haf here
my trauthe!’

Then our Fader to the fische ferslyche

bidde

That he him sput spakly upon spare drye.

The whal wendes at His wille and a warthe
fyndes,

340 And there he brakes up the burn, as bede
him our Lorde.

Then he swepe to the sonde in sluchchede
clothes;

Hit may wel be that mester were his mantyle
to wasche!

The bonk that he blusched to and bode him
byside

344 Were of the regiounes right that he renayed
hade.

Then a wynd of Godes word eft the wye
bruxles:

‘Nylt thou never to Ninive by no kynnes
wayes?’

‘Yis, Lord,’ quoth the lede, ‘lene me thy grace

348 For to go at thy gre – me gaynes non other.’

‘Ris, aproche then to preche! Lo the place
here.

Lo, my lore is in thee loken. Lause hit
thereinne!’

Then the renk radly ros as he myghte

352 And to Ninive that night he neghed ful even.

Hit was a city ful syde and selly of brede:

One to threng therethurgh was thre dayes

dede;

That on **journey** ful **joynt** Jonas him yede
356 Ere ever he warpped any word to wye that
he mette.

And then he cryed so cler that **kenne** myght
alle;

The true **tenor** of his **teme** he tolde on this
wyse:

‘Yet schal forty dayes fully fare to an ende
360 And then schal Ninive be nomen and to
noght worthe.

‘**Truly**, this ilk toun schal **tylte** to grounde:
Up-so-doun schal ye **dumpe** depe to the
abyrne,

To be swolwed swyftly with the **swart** erthe,
364 And all ledes that lyves hereinne lose the
swete.’

This speche sprang in that space and **sprad**
all aboute

To **borges** and to bacheleres that in that
burgh lenged.

Such a **hidor** hem hent and a hatel drede
368 That all chaunged her chere and chylled at
the herte.

The segge sesed not yet bot sayd ever ilyche:
‘The veray vengauce of God schal voyde
this place!’

Then the peple pitously playned ful stille,

372 And for the drede of Dryhtyn dared in herte.

Heter hayres thay hent, that asperly bited,
And those thay bounden to her bak and to
her bare sides,
Dropped dust on her hede and dymly
bisoghten

376 That that penaunce plesed Him that playnes
on her wronge.

And aye he cryes in that kyth til the kyng
herde;

And he radly up ros and ran fro his chayer.
His riche robe he to-rof of his rigge naked,

380 And of a hepe of askes he hit in the myddes.

He askes heterly a hayre and hasped him
umbe,

Sewed a sekke thereabove, and syked ful
colde.

There he dased in that dust, with droppande
teres,

384 Wepande ful wonderly all his wronge dedes.

Then sayd he to his sergauntes: ‘Samnes you
bylive!

Do drive out a decre, demed of myselven,
That alle the bodyes that ben withinne this
burgh quike, –

388 Bothe burnes and bestes, burdes and childer,

‘Uch a prince, uch a prest, and prelates alle,

Alle faste frely for her false werkes;
Seses childer of her sok, **soghe** hem so never,
392 Ne best bite on no **brom** ne on no bent
nauther,

‘Passe to no pasture, ne pike non erbes,
Ne non oxe to no hay, ne no horse to water.
All schal **crye** forclemmed with all our clere
strenthe;
396 The rurd schal rise to Him that routhe schal
have.

‘What wot other wit may if the Wye likes,
That is hende in the hyght of His gentryse?
I wot His myght is so much, thagh He be
myssepayed,
400 That in His mylde **amesyng** He mercy may
fynde.

‘And if we leven the layk of our **layth** synnes,
And stille steppen in the **stye** He stightles
Himselven,
He wil wende of His **wodschip** and His
wrathe **leve**,
404 And forgyve us this gylt, if we Him God
leven.’

Then all leved on His law and laften her
synnes,
Parformed all the penaunce that the prince
radde,
And God thurgh His **godnesse** **forgef**, as he

sayde, –

408 Thagh He other bihyght, withhelde His
vengaunce.

IV

MUCH sorwe then **satteled** upon segge
Jonas;

He wex as wroth as the wynd towards our
Lorde.

So has anger **onhit** him in his herte, he calles
412 A prayer to the highe prince for pine on this
wyse:

‘I beseche thee, syre, now **thouself jugge**,
Was not this ilk my word, that worthen is
nowthe,

That I cast in my countre, when thou thy
carp sendes

416 That I schuld tee to this toun thy **talent** to
preche?

‘Wel knew I thy courtaysye, thy quoynte
suffraunce,

Thy bounte of **debonerte** and thy bene grace,
Thy longe **abydyng** with lur, thy late
vengaunce, –

420 And aye thy mercy is mete, be mysse never
so huge.

‘I wyst wel, when I had **worded** whatsoever I
couthe

To **manace** all these mody men that in this

mote dwelles,
With a prayer and a pine thay myght her
pese gete,
424 And **therefore** I wolde have flowen fer into
Tarce.

‘Now, Lord, lach out my lif: hit lastes to
longe;
Bede me bylive my **bale-stour** and bryng me
on ende!
For me were swetter to swelt as swythe, as
me thinkes,
428 Then lede lenger thy lore, that thus me les
makes.’

The soun of our Soverayn then swey in his
ere,
That **upbraydes** this burn upon a breme
wyse:
‘Herk, renk, is this right, so **ronkly** to wrathe
432 For any dede that I have done or demed thee
yette?’

Jonas all joyles and janglande up rises,
And holdes out on est half of the highe place,
And **farandely** on a **felde** he **fetteles** him to
bide,
436 For to **wayte** on that won what schuld
worthe after.

There he busked him a bour, the best that he
myghte,

Of hay and of everferne and erbes a few;
For hit was playn in that place fro plyande
greves

440 For to schylde fro the schene or any schade
caste.

He bowed under his little bothe, his bak to
the sunne,

And there he swowed and slept sadly all
nighte,

The while God of His grace did grow of that
soyle

444 The fayrest bynde him above that ever burn
wyste.

When the dawande day Dryhtyn con sende,
Then wakened the wye under wodbynde,
Loked aloft on the lef that lyllede grene;

448 Such a lefsel of lof never lede hade.

For hit was brod at the bothom, boghted on
lofte,

Happed upon ayther half, a house as hit
were,

A nos on the north side and nowhere non
elles,

452 Bot all schet in a schawe that schaded ful
cole.

The gome glyfte on the grene gracious leves,
That ever wayved a wynd so wythe and so
cole.

The schyre sunne hit **umbe-schon**, thagh no
schaft myghte

456 The mountaunce of a little mote upon that
man **schyne**.

Then was the gome so glad of his gay loge,
Lys **loltrande** thereinne, lokande to tounne,
So blythe of his wodbynde he **balteres**
thereunder,

460 That of no **diete** that day the devel half he
roghte.

And ever he laghed as he loked the loge all
aboutte,

And wysched hit were in his **kyth**, there he
wone **schulde**,

On high upon Effraym or Ermonnes hilles:

464 'Iwysse, a worthloker won to welde I never
keped.'

And when it neghed to night **nappe** him
behoved.

He slydes on a sloumbe slepe, **sloghe** under
leves,

While God wayned a **worme** that **wrot** up the
rote,

468 And **wyddered** was the wodbynde by that the
wye wakened.

And sithen He warnes the west to waken ful
softe,

And says unto Zeferus that he syfle warme,

That there **quikken** no cloude before the cler
sunne,
472 And ho schal **busch** up ful brode and **brenne**
as a candel.

Then wakened the wye of his **wyl-dremes**,
And blusched to his wodbynde, that brothely
was marred:
All **welwed** and wasted tho worthilyche
leves, –
476 The schyre sunne had hem schent ere ever
the **schalk** wyste.

And then hef up the hete and heterly
brenned,
The **warm** wynde of the west wortes he
swythes.
The man marred on the **molde**, that myght
him not hyde:
480 His wodbynde was away, – he weped for
sorwe.

With **hatel** anger and hot heterly he calles:
'A, thou Maker of man, what maystery thee
thinke
Thus thy freke to forfare forbi all other?
484 With all meschef that thou may never thou
me spares.

'I kevered me a comfort that now is caght fro
me:
My wodbynde so wlonk, that wered my

heved.

Bot now I see thou art set my solace to reve;
488 Why ne dightes thou me to die? I **dure** to
longe.'

Yet our Lord to the lede laused a speche:
'Is this ryghtwys, thou renk, all thy ronk
noyse,

So wroth for a wodbynde to **waxe** so sone?
492 Why art thou so **waymot**, wye, for so little?'

'Hit is not little,' quoth the lede, 'bot **lykker**
to righte.

I wolde I were of this world, wrapped in
moldes.'

'Then bithenk thee, man: if thee forthynk
sore,

496 If I wolde helpe my **hand-werk** haf thou no
wonder!

'Thou art waxen so wroth for thy wodbynde,
And **travayledes** never to **tent** hit the tyme of
an houre,

Bot at a **wap** hit here wex, away at an other;
500 And yet likes thee so luther, thy lif woldes
thou tyne.

'Then wyte me not for the werk, that I hit
wolde helpe,

And rue on tho redles that remen for synne.

First I made hem myself of materes myn one,

504 And sithen I loked hem ful longe and hem on

lode hade.

‘And if I my travayl schuld tyne of termes so
longe,

And **type** doun yonder toun when it turned
were,

The sore of such a swete place **burde** synk to
my herte,

508 So many **malicious** man as mournes
thereinne.

‘And of that **somme** yet are summe such
sottes **formadde**

As little barnes on **barme** that never bale
wroghte,

And wymmen **unwytte** that **wale** ne couthe

512 That on hand fro that other for all this highe
worlde.

[‘Bitwene the stele and the stayre disserne
nogh conne,

What rule rennes in **roun** bitwene the right
hande

515 And his lyft, thagh his lif schuld lost be
therefore.]

‘And als there ben **doumbe** bestes in the
burgh mony

That may not **synne** in no syt hemselven to
greve.

Why schuld I wrath with hem, syn wyes wil
turne,

519 And come and know me for kyng and my
carp leve?

‘Were I as **hasty** as thou here, were harme
lumpen;

Couthe I not thole bot as thou, there thryved
ful fewe.

I may not be so malicious and mylde be
holden,

523 For malyce is noght to **mayntyne** bout mercy
withinne.

‘Be noght so **gryndel**, goodman, bot go forth
thy wayes:

Be preue and be pacient in payne and in
joye;

For he that is to **rakel** to **renden** his clothes

527 Mot eft sitte with more unsounde to **sewe**
hem togeder.’

Forthy when poverte me enpresses and
paynes inoghe

Ful softly with suffraunce **saghttel** me
behoves.

Forthy penaunce and payne **to-preve** hit in
sighte

531 That pacience is a noble poynt, thagh hit
displese ofte.



SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

Foreword

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight has a serious claim to be the finest of the Arthurian romances produced among the emergent vernaculars of the European Middle Ages. By contrast with Chaucer and Langland, however, the poem achieved no significant circulation. There is a fifteenth-century ballad, *The Greene Knight*, that retells the story, which the writer apparently knew from some version of *Sir Gawain*, of which there are faint verbal echoes at some points.¹ And the poem may have been known to some within its own Cheshire area, since one of the poems (XXII) in the commonplace book of the Cheshire gentleman Humfrey Newton (1466–1536) draws heavily on the style of the alliterative verse of an earlier generation, verse for which *Sir Gawain* may well have been his model. Newton's poem recalls *Sir Gawain* in its topics (love, the hunt, the succession of the seasons, a castle in a craggy landscape) and shares with the earlier work some unusual alliterative collocations.² But otherwise there are no medieval references to the poem or its (still unidentified) author. And, again unlike Chaucer and Langland, *Sir Gawain* remained unpublished and unread throughout most of the post-medieval period. The first notice taken of it occurred

in a revision in 1824 to volume I of Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry* (1781) by the librarian Richard Price, who referred to the manuscript containing *Sir Gawain*³ and quoted seventeen lines from the poem,⁴ with some uncomplimentary remarks on its barbarously un-Chaucerian language. Not until 1839 did the first edition of the poem (by Sir Frederic Madden) appear, and not until 1864, with the edition by Richard Morris – which, along with the companion edition by him of the other three poems in the manuscript, formed the first and fourth volumes of the Early English Text Society series – did the poem really arrive at the court of public opinion, by which, however, it was greeted with instant, unanimous and increasing admiration, despite the uncouthness of its linguistic dress and the difficulties presented for a modern audience by its North-West Midland dialect and the special diction of the alliterative metre in which it is written.

An ingenious and colourful plot is among the most immediately obvious attractions of this epitome of a perfect chivalric romance. It is a double plot centred in a novel way on two game-exchanges, the one embedded in the other, connected to each other in a manner that is revealed only at the end. Adventures could be elaborately interlaced in Arthurian romance, but there is little precedent for the neatness and meaningfulness of the double test of this poem – whereby Gawain's conduct in a relatively ordinary domestic setting determines his fate in a seemingly suspended adventure of a more dramatically exciting

kind. The latter, the beheading game, has a clear source or analogue in a story told in the First Continuation (to Chrétien's *Perceval*)⁵ – where, however, the stranger challenger turns out to be the father of the hero (Carados), is not supernatural in size or colour, receives and delivers the blow with a sword, returns to the court for the exchange blow (nothing that happens in the interim being relevant), and where Carados commits no fault and incurs only unqualified praise.

The other game has no clear source. In the three hunts which run parallel with the three bedroom scenes, the poet may well have been, consciously or unconsciously, influenced by *Ipomedon*, an Anglo-Norman romance by Hue de Rotelande, which, as three extant anglicizations of it demonstrate, was well known in England. As well as a visit to the hero's bedroom by a lady in love with him,⁶ the romance features three successive days on which the hero pretends to go hunting, but on which he actually takes part in three tournaments (3545ff). The romance shares with *Sir Gawain* the device of using hunts on successive days to structure an entire section of narrative in a contrastive way with reference to some other activity – although the hunts in *Ipomedon* figure as a *less* manly and more effete counterpart to the battles, whereas in *Sir Gawain* they figure as the physically *more* (if morally and socially less) demanding counterpart to the indoor and verbal manoeuvres of the hero. The later poet has, that is, transformed as he borrowed. He has also made the

hunts more vivid and varied: they reflect the three distinct categories into which game could be divided, each involving different hunting challenges and tactics. The deer belong to the category of *red game*, often hunted in great numbers; the boar to that of *black game*, which required courage, since the animal (bear or boar) was dangerous, and usually hunted singly; the fox to that of *small game*, where the quarry (commonly fox or hare) was typically a pest. These subdivisions figure in Hartmann von Aue's *Erec*, where another model estate (belonging to another model lord who is another model of hospitality) has hunting grounds divided into three, one stocked with *rôtwilt* [red wild animals], the second with *schwarzwilt* and the third (as the narrator assumes the audience, recognizing the taxonomy, will have guessed) with *kleiniu kunder*, 'foxes, hares and the like' (7130–54). The *Gawain* poet seems to have imagined Bertilak's grounds as similarly designed to offer, in different areas, hunting opportunities for every taste.

The noise and energy of the hunts provide, of course, a more dramatic contrast with the bedroom scenes than with the tournaments in *Ipomedon*. It is, however, sometimes wrongly implied that the contrast with the bedroom scenes is one between courtly sophistication and crude, inartificial violence. In fact, hunting was a rule-bound ritual which was seen as the epitome, not the reverse, of courtliness: Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan is a master 'an höfscher jegerîe' [in the courtly art of hunting] (*Tristan* 3313), Hue de Rotelande's Protheselaus has a 'Curteis' enthusiasm for

the sport (1778), and his Ipomedon is ‘corteis e affaité de bois’ [courtly and instructed in woodmanship] (649). The hunt was by this date an art, to which countless manuals were devoted (manuals which, as the notes will illustrate, provide many parallels for details in *Sir Gawain*), and the poem consistently foregrounds that fact – even at the outset, where the noisy ebullience of the hounds (1142) is at once subjected to the discipline and skill of the dog handlers, the ‘cacheres that couthe’ (1139) who ‘chastysed and charred’ the pack (1143). Gawain and his host, in short, exchange what each has ‘worthily wonnen’ (1386) by verbal/physical skills and their otherwise contrasting activities match each other in that respect.

With reference to Gawain’s refusal, in the bedroom scenes, of the lady’s advances, the poet is, as often, following, but with marked independence, incidents in chivalric romance: that is, the situation has parallels, but no close ones, since the emphasis on the double bind of truth (to his host) and courtesy (to the lady) in which Gawain finds himself (1773–5) is peculiar to this poem. The situation of a knight rejecting the sexual advances of a lady (the host’s wife in *Yder* 306–476, Guinevere in Marie de France’s *Lanval* 259–74, a damsel in the *Lancelot* IV, 127), is not uncommon, but in these cases there is no particular obligation felt by the knight towards kindness and courtesy to the lady. Ban, in the Vulgate *Merlin*, falls in love with the daughter of a host and is as alive as Gawain to the potential treachery to his host an affair would involve:

‘il pensoit que ce seroit traison por ce que on lor avoit fait grant honor laiens & que on les avoit herbergiet laiens si li est avis que nule grignor honte ne li poroit il faire’ [he thought it would be treachery because he had been greatly honoured and well lodged there, and so it seemed to him that he could not do a more shameful deed] (p. 404). But the lady is daughter not wife, and the conflict is between love (not courtesy) and truth. For the scenario in the exchange of winnings, other romances similarly furnish suggestions rather than sources, and there is certainly no extant text that offers any precedent for combining that plot motif with the beheading game.

Inventive elaboration within a tradition is as apparent in the metre as in the plot of the poem. The poem is written in the same alliterative metre (see pp. xxi–xxviii) as are *Cleanness* and *Patience*. But the number of departures from the *aa/ax* norm in *Sir Gawain* is significantly higher. There are many more lines alliterating *aaaa*, *abab*, *abba* and a number of *ax/ax* and *xa/ax* ones. Though scribal corruption cannot be ruled out, these patterns might also show the poet playing variations and sometimes happy simply to observe the rule that obtained in Old English verse: that alliteration is required only to cross the caesura, *aa/ax* being an optimal rather than a regularly required norm. The second stress commonly fell in alliterative verse at the caesura; but there are in *Sir Gawain* many verses – such as ‘The lord loutes thereto’ (933), ‘Rich red on that one’ (952), ‘Schon schyrer then snaw’ (956) – which may be scanned *aa(x)*, with

the word at caesura uncharacteristically unstressed, or *(a)ax*, where *(a)* indicates an alliterating but unstressed word. The latter would imply a willingness to experiment with the separation of stress and alliteration, which would also account for another pattern, involving a combination (usually *adjective + noun*), one of whose components provides the alliteration for the other a-verse stress, the other the alliterating sound for the third stress:

While New Yere was so yep that hit was newe comen (60)
And also an other maner meved him eke (90)
Bot never the lesse ne the later thay newened bot mirthe
(541)
Now all these fyve sythes, for sothe, were fettled on this
knighte (656)

This both surprises and satisfies an ear expecting the traditional *aa/ax* pattern. There are also frequent instances of thickened alliteration, whereby an extra alliterating (but non-stressed) item is included in the opening dip – a cluster of such lines occurring, for example, in the description of Gawain's host:

Brod, bryght was his *berd*, and all *bever* hued;
Sturne, *stif* on the *strythe*, on *stalworthe* schankes;
Felle face as the *fire* and *fre* of his *speche* ... (845–7)

These lines are thus given a distinctive and uniting rhythm that produces the effect of discrete features somehow adding up to the same thing (i.e. an authoritative presence), as the alliterating sound triply asserts itself, strengthening from unstressed into the two stressed words which firmly straddle the double dip of the a-verse, the lines giving a kind of metrical emphasis to the sturdy countenance and bearing of

this ideal lord of a castle.

Most importantly, the alliterative lines are grouped into stanzas (of an irregular number of lines) by being punctuated at intervals by a five-line bob-and-wheel: a single-beat line of one or two words (the bob), followed by four three-stressed ones (the wheel), the five forming iambic lines rhyming *ababa*. The poet thus divides the alliterative long lines into more digestible units, as well as exploiting to good and varied effect the change in pace and rhythm that occurs with the bob-and-wheel. The bob-and-wheel occurs elsewhere, but only to round off rhyming stanzas of regular length and rhyme pattern. This poet has chosen – uniquely, as far as we know – to combine two different verse systems: an unpredictable number of alliterative long lines modulate into the bob-and-wheel, whose rhyming single-dip iambics produce a satisfying contrast with the alliterative lines structured rhythmically on the double dip required in each half line. The metre thus shares in the duality that pervades the plot, style and organization of the poem – and shows a poet master enough of the *aa/ax* norm to play his own innovative variations on its theme.

The same holds true for his treatment of romance. The seminal texts had appeared some hundred years previously in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries (to which period belong all the French and German works referred to above and below). These had established a genre in which the cast and the ethos were essentially courtly, and in *Sir Gawain* the vocabulary of courtesy and quality forms a rich and

varied lexical set (*gentyl*, *hende*, *cortays*, *mensk*-, *quoynt*, *daynte*, *noble*, etc) that defines the society depicted at every level. Such words may refer to material luxury and elegance: festive music-making is 'gentyl' (1021), bedding is 'noble' (853), 'dayntyes' are served at feasts (483, 998, 1401), a mantle is 'mensked' [adorned] with fur (153). They most often refer to the behavioural and verbal graces, the 'talking noble' and 'dainty words', of a hero insistently characterized as *hende* [courteous], *cortays* and *gentyl*. And at a higher level still, they may denote divine graciousness: Mary is the 'hende' queen of heaven (647), God is the source of all 'menskes' [graces: 2410], and Gawain addresses prayers to a God and a saint who are both 'gentyl' and whose positive response to his need demonstrates their 'courtaysye' (774–5). This is a world integrated and informed, materially and ethically, by a courtly value system that is felt as having profound moral and spiritual significance.

The moral of the poem concerns *truth* [good faith, integrity], an inclusive concept and a key word in Middle English, and a term central to all three of the otherwise widely differing major narrative poems of the fourteenth century: romantic truth in Chaucer's *Troilus*, moral-spiritual truth in Langland's *Piers Plowman*, and moral-chivalric truth here in *Sir Gawain*. For its centrality to the chivalric ideal in particular, one may compare Chaucer's Franklin's Tale and the narratively crucial priority there given to *truth* by the knight Arveragus ('Trouthe is the hyeste thing that

man may kepe': CT V.1479). But as no other romance provides such a detailed study of *courtesy*, so no other subjects *truth* to such close and imaginative analysis. For the poet provides for it, in the form of the pentangle by which he presents it as betokened, a complicated emblem which he treats as Gawain's identifying heraldic device, and which he explicates at considerable length (619–65), emphasizing its knot-like intricacy, and presenting truth as a complex multiple of twenty-five elements. He certainly portrays his hero as at all times having to satisfy complex and competing moral desiderata: the emphasis falling, not simply on Gawain's brave and honourable actions in themselves (rescuing Arthur from a dangerous game and playing it out, rejecting the advances of his host's wife), but on the speech-acts in which, by rendering those acts inoffensive to others, he avoids offending in another direction (against courtesy). His first action (339–61) and his main action (his rejection of the lady over the course of Fitt III) are verbal rather than physical feats. The golden knot of the pentangle is thus the moral counterpart of the intricate embroidery upon Gawain's helmet strap (608–14) or the gold thread interlacing the green horse's mane ('Aye a herle of the hayre, an other of golde': 190). In fact, ethics and aesthetics come very close together in this poem,⁷ the poet plainly admiring the moral artistry with which Gawain at all times satisfies both honour and courtesy, and appreciating intricately patterned finesse in behaviour and accessories alike, as equally the hallmarks of a society with some genuine claim to

superiority.

As well as *truth*, another romance ethic reflected in the poem is that of the knight as distinguished by both *prowess* and *courtesy*. He is both a brave and fearless warrior in military contexts and the perfect gentleman in social ones. The poet's winter setting makes for a strong contrast between the outdoor and indoor worlds and underlines the transition between Gawain's gruelling journey, spent in battles and snowstorms, and the festively luxurious interior of the castle in which he spends Christmas – a transition that brings with it a shift in moral focus, as he steps from one area of his pentangularly composite perfections to another: from the armed knight among foes, 'doghty and drye' [doughty and persevering] (724), to the knight in civil dress (864–70) among friends – a host court eagerly expecting a display of the behavioural niceties ('sleghtes of thewes') and verbal skills in conversation and courtesy ('talkynge noble') of a knight famed as the very epitome of good breeding ('that fyne fader of nurture': 916–19). This general contrast between *prowess* and *courtesy* is part of that more pervasive duality of setting and emphasis that gives the poem its satisfyingly varied colour and pace. The alternation between the hunts and the bedroom scenes that dominates Fitt III continues the contrast between the knight outdoors and the knight indoors, as the ethical feats of Gawain (in balancing the claims of courtesy and truth) are paralleled by the more traditionally heroic image of knighthood presented by the host in an activity always regarded as good

training for the battlefield, and in which his fight against the most dangerous of the animals involved, the boar, is certainly modelled on chivalric scenes of single combat.⁸ The alternating scenes are as central to the style and sensibility of the poem as they are to its narrative. For the poet is peculiar in combining a positively Jamesian appreciation of the minutiae of indoor graces, in both behaviour and accessories, the rich material and moral texture of cultivated and refined tastes, with an equal intensity of response to the outside world of raw energies and harsh and stark scenery (cataclysms, snowstorms, jagged cliffs, the aggressive energies of man and nature in battles both military and meteorological).

This bifocal awareness is reflected in dual allegiances as regards literary and linguistic tradition. *Sir Gawain* is in many ways modelled on the chivalric romance as it had been developed in French,⁹ and, as the notes will illustrate, the poem often closely shadows its French models in narrative incident, and in visual and verbal detail. But these romances provide no real counterparts to the expressive grimness of, for instance, the sleety weather (726–32) or the desolate topography of the Green Chapel, which is little more than a hole in the landscape (‘nobot an olde cave’: 2182). If the poet is, in these scenes, indebted to anything, it is to his Germanic rather than his Gallic inheritance, Old English verse (the snowstorms of the *The Wanderer* and the barrow of *Beowulf*) providing closer analogies than anything in French romance. Two colourful sets of loan words that contribute to the

lexical richness and inventiveness that is such a marked feature of the poem create an analogous duality in the poem's vocabulary. There is a large and noticeable element of often sophisticated French loan words. These can occur in any context, but they are most noticeable with reference to the sophistications of behaviour and accoutrements of the courtly world, characterizing all that is *gentyl*, *cortays* and *quoynt* in manners and bearing, or fashionable masterpieces of construction, from the bedding with 'covertores ful curious' (855) to the castle 'Enbaned under the abataylment' (790). The poet himself associates the gracious bonhomie of his courtly figures with French, referring to the 'frenkysch fare and fele fayre lotes' [French demeanour and pleasantly phrased words] (1116) with which they bid each other a mannerly good night. The most interesting lexical transition from Germanic to French comes, however, at a less predictable point: when Gawain commits his one fatal error. The lady says the girdle which she offers him, and which he has refused, has life-preserving powers – at which point Gawain, understandably but fatally, pauses for thought:

Then caste the knight, and him com to herte
Hit were a juel for the joparde that him jugged were ...
(1855–6)

The exclusively Germanic vocabulary of line 1855 serves to throw into greater relief the obtrusively Gallic nature of the following line, in which all the alliterating beats fall on French loan words. Its sophisticated French vocabulary slows the line down, and ensures that it cannot pass easily by for the reader

or listener, just as the possibility it expresses is something that cannot fail to glitter in Gawain's mind with the richness of the *juel* that is evoked by both the metaphor and the lexical finery in which the idea comes dressed.

Since the poet's dialect area of Cheshire had been part of the Danelaw, he had at his disposal a number of Scandinavian loan words not found in Chaucer's London English, and of these he is equally ready to avail himself. These, too, are very varied in sense, but tend to be more noticeable, by contrast with the Gallic element, with reference to the starker and harsher, elemental or unregulated aspects of life. When Gawain rides down the steep rocky path to what he assumes to be his death at the Green Chapel, he looks at the flanking cliffs and 'The skues of the scowtes skayned him thoghte' [the clouds seemed to him to be grazed by the rocks] (2167). The metaphor well suggests the rawness of the sensibility upon which the landscape is registering itself at this point, and the effect of the line is considerably enhanced by the Scandinavian texture and sound of its alliterating words (the *sk-* sound being characteristic of Scandinavian loans). Thus, whereas the civilities and comforts of the *bone hostel* (776) encountered by Gawain are heralded by two markedly French loan words (*Avinaunt* and *plesaunt*: 806, 808), the most expressive adjectives characterizing the grim weather and terrain associated with the Chapel are Germanic in origin: both the sky that morning and the Chapel are *ugly* (2079, 2190), a Scandinavian word more sinister than it is today, and

more unusual, being confined to northern dialects; and Gawain sums up the desolate site as *wysty* (2189), an adjective derived from Old English *westig*, still used in early Middle English, but recorded thereafter only in *Sir Gawain* and *The Wars of Alexander* (another alliterative poem).

The poet was, then, peculiarly well suited to do justice to his double-barrelled plot and to the alternation between *prowess* and *courtesy* that underlies, but is seldom explored in, much French romance, just as he shows a distinctive interest in the whole meaning and point of *courtesy* and *truth*. He also enters with spirit and commitment into the all the usual topoi of the genre (castles, hunts, beautiful ladies, feasts), to make of them exercises in *descriptio* that provide more detailed and memorable scenes and pictures than occur anywhere else. In many ways, the poem is thus simply the last word in romance: a work in which the possibilities of the genre are realized to the full.

But there is, even in the first of the poem's four fitts, some sophisticated and artfully self-conscious play with generic conventions. Words indicating the marvellous, like those to do with courtesy, form a significant lexical set in the poem, and amid a cluster of such words in the second stanza (*ferlyes, selly in sight, outrage aventure of Arthures wonderes*) the poet offers his audience, in the tale to come, what promises to have the special excitement of the wondrous. Once Camelot and Christmas festivities have been introduced, the poet focuses on Arthur, giving his own subtle twist to a custom of Arthur's recorded

elsewhere in romance: at high festivals, he would not eat until he had heard or seen some marvel. *Sir Gawain's* king has a youthful Hotspur-like enthusiasm for chivalry, but in this connection is actually less naive than his more mature equivalent in other romances. He does not demand an *actual* marvel: he wants a *report* of one, a story both new and not obviously incredible:

... he wolde never ete
Upon such a dere day ere him devised were
Of sum aventurus thing an uncouth tale,
Of sum mayn mervayl that he myght trowe,
Of alderes, of armes, of other adventures ... (91–5)

Failing that, he is prepared to settle for a joust or challenge, as the nearest thing that real life has to offer in the way of chivalric excitement. In the event, of course, he gets what these lines suggest he really wants, but is not so unrealistic as to hope for: an *actual* challenge that is also a *marvel*. The expectation of a marvel which the poet has created in the minds of his audience is thus deflected into the world of the narrative itself, as the chief character on stage is discovered also expecting a marvel – and expecting it, as does the audience, to take the form of a *tale* or report. This both blurs the boundary between inner and outer audience and creates *within* the fictional world the same distinction between marvellous *tale* and non-marvellous reality as normally exists *between* the fiction and the real world of the audience. As a result, the audience is almost as surprised as the court when the marvellous does irrupt into the court's 'real' world. When the incident is over, Arthur, in order to

restore festive cheer, treats it jestingly as one of those pageants or dramatic spectacles (called ‘interludes’) often staged at Christmas, and as therefore quite ‘natural’ (*kynde*) to Christmas entertainments:

‘Wel becomes such craft upon Cristmasse –
Laykyng of enterludes, to laghe and to synge,
Among these kynde caroles of knyghtes and ladies.’ (471–3)

This again classes the marvellous as something whose reality is that of the entertainment value it provides for the real world from which it is distinct, and enhances the impression of a boundary between the two that has shifted *into* the tale rather than between it and the audience’s own world. As the interrupted feast is resumed, the strange incident does seem indeed to be falling back into the realm of spectacular *tale* out of which it had emerged. The non-naïve among the poet’s audience (who had heard too many Arthurian romances to respond to their marvels with wide-eyed innocence) would certainly have appreciated the knowing reflexivity of the words given to Arthur, through which the poet himself can surely be heard: ‘Is this not exactly the kind of action-packed improbability that we all want from a Christmas story?’ The common assumption that the poem was itself intended as Christmas entertainment is in fact partly due to the blurring of internal and external audience which the poet creates in this fitt. His point is, however, serious as well as witty. The marvels that belong to a tale make no demands on us; but, as the fitt closes on a happily resumed normality, the narrator warns Gawain (487–90) that he must now see

a dangerous business through – he cannot simply put the book down, as it were.

A similar piece of sophisticated self-reference occurs with the hero and his reputation. Gawain's pre-eminence in the seminal romances of Chrétien de Troyes was based precisely on that combination of prowess and courtesy which he more than any other epitomized. In *Sir Gawain*, the stranger knight is delighted to find that Gawain (of whom he has plainly heard) is to be his opponent (386–91). Bertilak's household have also heard of Gawain (908–27), as has his wife (1226–9). And in fact Gawain regularly figures in Arthurian romance as a knight preceded by a pre-existing reputation for pre-eminence in both courage and, above all, in courtesy, and as a man all have heard of and want to meet.¹⁰ By the date of this poem, the favourable report already attached to his name was not so much a fictional supposition as a literary fact, created by those very French romances which had by now established the pre-existing fame they posited. But the effect of the repeated emphasis in *Sir Gawain* on the expectations aroused by his very name is, once again, to blur the boundaries between the internal and the external audience. When Bertilak's court voice their expectations of seeing some signal examples of courtesy from this famous father of good breeding (908–27), they are in effect voicing the expectations of the reader or listener,¹¹ who also assumes that some of that famous superfineness of honourable and considerate conduct will now be forthcoming.

The poem is, however, unusual in its lack of emphasis on the combats and love affairs of the hero. Gawain's journey to the Green Chapel does require him to engage in combats, but these are passed over summarily (715–25), and, though the passage is sufficient to indicate that he had a knight's necessary fighting skills to draw on when he needed them (cf. 2482), it is of course part of the point of the poem and its plot to suggest that a knight's virtues will chiefly be tested in normal social intercourse, not in spectacular duels, and the plot does not otherwise require Gawain to defeat anyone on the field. And if, as regards prowess, courage and firmness of purpose are not in this poem proved primarily by a list of defeated opponents, courtesy and truth are even more carefully and emphatically distinguished from something the poet obviously felt they had got incorrectly muddled up with, inside and outside romance: verbal skills put to the purposes of flirtation and seduction, the fidelity that results from sexual and amorous passion – 'love', in fact, in all its guises. The lady indicates at once that she would have expected the true Gawain to have taken advantage of a tête-à-tête with her and 'craved a cosse by his courtaysye' (1300), for his famed mastery of social skills and fine sense of truth would surely lead to a display of 'trueluf craftes' (1527). Romances are part of her argument: a true knight could not be so unresponsive to her, for the great knight is typically a lover, and it is love that inspires and motivates all his feats in combat:

'And of all chevalry to chose, the chef thing alosed
Is the *lel* layk of luf, the *lettrure* of armes;

For to telle of this tevelynge of these *true* knightes,
Hit is the *tytelet* token and *tyxt* of her *werkes*
How ledes for her *lel* luf her lyves have auntered,
Endured for her drury delfulle stoundes ...' (1512–17)

We have here yet another witty reference to the expectations of readers of the romance genre to which the poem belongs. A 'title' was at this date often a summarizing rubric introducing a section of text (and such a title could begin precisely '*How ...*'). The lady is claiming that love forms the epitomizing title and the ensuing 'text' or matter of all knightly *werkes* (a word which here conflates knightly 'deeds' with the literary 'works' in which they figure), the words *lettrure*, *tytel*- and *tyxt* here being both literal and metaphorical: love is the ABC and central theme of chivalry as it appears in the rubrics and texts of romance literature. Nor is her representation unjust: the classic tales of chivalry did have such a romantic bias, the knight's military ardour feeding off, and interchangeable with, his romantic ardour, his lady being the inspiration for his prowess. Hers is an account of chivalry, however, which shifts the issue of *truth* (represented here by the adjectives *true* [faithful] and *lel* [loyal, true]) from the truth Gawain owes another *man* (the lady's husband and his host) to that owed to a mistress, implying Gawain's truth would not be sacrificed, but exercised, by a romantic liaison. Gawain, however, politely declines to enter into conversation on such romantic texts: he is not competent to 'touche the temes of tyxt and tales of armes' (1541) with someone who, he pointedly observes, is obviously a hundred times more expert in

this field than he is. There is, of course, wit here, and even a kind of literary *trompe l'œil*, Gawain speaking in effect as a 'modern' and 'real' knight who does not read the kind of Arthurian romance of which he is often in fact, as here, the hero. But in associating such a romantic orientation of chivalry with the lady's temptation, and in his hero's courteous but firm disclaimer of any desire to model himself on such lover-heroes, the poet is, in effect, dissociating his own sense of chivalry from one aspect of romance which the present tale plainly represents as corrupt and potentially corrupting: its love-centred credo. Sexual passion may lead to truth in love, the poet seems to say, but it is no very strong guarantor of the truth more generally and fundamentally owed to one's fellow men, which it is more likely to tempt a knight from than to enhance. For love can be in effect an alternative morality, and chivalric romance could encourage a kind of pride in sacrificing all other ties to heterosexual passion when (as in *Sir Gawain*) the two were in any way in conflict.

The poet, then, is clear that he wishes, as a romancer, to take truth and courtesy out of the bedroom, and that the traditional romance model would not much have served to strengthen Gawain in keeping truth where it most needed to be kept. But it is in its ending and its moral that the poem is perhaps least romance-like. Gawain is tried, and found to be less than perfect, so that the traditional success of the romance hero can here be only a qualified success, and such qualifications are not typical of the genre,

which deals characteristically in absolutes and superlatives. The ending thus constantly alternates between upbeat and downbeat verdicts on Gawain, producing a more complex music than is usually heard at the end of a romance. The view of others – of Bertilak and of the Arthurian court – is positive, stressing what Gawain should be honoured for in the way he behaved: he kept his promise to journey to the Green Chapel to receive what he could only believe would be his death-blow, and was similarly true to his host in resisting (even when he assumed he had only three days left to live) the advances of a very beautiful woman who was throwing herself at him and whom he certainly found very attractive. Gawain's own verdict on himself is harsher, and he concentrates on what he did wrong, rather than on the areas where his conduct could not be faulted. There is, of course, no real conflict between these views: Gawain, as the guilty one, is rightly mortified, and he would not be the man we have admired, with so keen a sense of honour, did he not take his one small failing very seriously. It would, however, be intolerably sanctimonious in anyone else to stress that failing to a man who shows himself only too conscious of it and who has been in every other way so scrupulously *true*. The two views are both right in those who propound them and do not amount to a contradiction: Gawain is an excellent man who deserves the honour Bertilak and the court give him for his conduct in the affair, but he is not perfect, for no mortal can be, and he is right to feel keenly conscious of that fact.

Thus the pendulum swings between honour and shame in such a way as to force the reader to qualify each view with the other. The girdle, too, becomes a shifting token of shame and honour.¹² Bertilak gives it to Gawain as a *token* of the whole adventure or *chaunce* ('and this a pure token Of the chaunce of the Grene Chapel at chevalrous knightes': 2398–9). Gawain accepts it, however, in a penitential spirit, as a 'syngne' (2433) of his transgression, which will humble, not exalt, his pride in chivalric company, reminding him of the weakness of the flesh (2433–6). On his journey home, he wears it shield-wise 'In tokenyng he was tan in tech of a faute' (2488). The girdle as sign or token is here (in being associated with a shield) starting to take on a heraldic role that implies it has replaced the pentangle, the 'syngne ... of traute' (625–6), as a 'sign' of who and what Gawain is.¹³ Gawain himself uses heraldic terms in a most interesting way when explaining to the court the faults he committed: 'This is the bende of this blame I bere in my nekke' (2506). The girdle is worn slanting ('abelef': 2517) across Gawain's chest, and a diagonal stripe in heraldry was termed a *bende*. The nick in the neck is now virtually healed (2484), and would not in any case be visible. But the girdle is its more public counterpart and acts to emblazon the weakness for which he received that nick. He must, he continues, wear it for the rest of his life. There is in fact no compulsion on him to do so, but it is a different kind of 'must' that the reason he gives points to: 'For man may hyden his harme, bot unhap ne may hit, For there

hit ones is tached twynne wil hit never' (2511–12). The healed nick could be hidden, but though we all can and do keep our weaknesses out of sight, they are facts woven inextricably into our lives and cannot be undone, and the *bende* will ensure Gawain's does not fall out of his own notice or that of others. The court, however, turns this badge of shame into a badge of honour when they resolve to adopt it as a kind of insignia of the Round Table: 'And he honoured that hit had evermore after' (2520).

These alternating emphases make for a complex finale that is neither wholeheartedly celebratory nor unqualifiedly penitential. The final tableau is positive – but chivalric adventure has lost something of its shine and excitement. For instance, the adventures passed over on the outward journey had been, we are told, so many and so many dramatic that it would be hard to tell a tenth of them (719); but when this topos recurs with respect to the homeward journey, it is flatter in tone: 'And mony aventure in vale he venquished ofte That I ne tyght at this tyme in tale to remene' (2482–3). A poet who sounds no longer excited by his material can also be heard at the close. As the poem comes full circle (the first line is repeated at 2525), the mood is rather different: the *aunter* or adventure is now no longer special (see [p. 250](#)), but is one among 'many such' that have occurred: 'Mony aunteres here-biforne Haf fallen such ere this' (2527–8). Gawain was neither the first nor the last to discover he could not unfailingly live up to his ideals, and the sad mundanity of its moral has obviously

made the *aunter* seem perhaps not so uncommon after all.

‘HONY SOYT QUI MAL PENCE’ [shamed be anyone who thinks ill of it]: this, the motto of the Order of the Garter, is written out after the last line of the poem, and represents the final move in a closure that has involved many and complicated stages. If the addendum is scribal, the very fact that a scribe thought it relevant is sufficiently interesting. But it acts as a comment on the tale subtle and complex enough to be authorial. The poem had closed with what could be seen as a prototypical act of founding an order of knighthood: the Round Table has been turned into a formal ‘brotherhede’ (2516) with a heraldic insignia (‘A bende abelef ... of a bryght grene’: 2517). That the scene should trigger an allusion to contemporary orders of knighthood is not surprising: *The Greene Knight* links the green *bende* with the insignia of the Knights of the Order of the Bath (502). And the most famous of such orders in the time and place to which *Sir Gawain* belongs was the Order of the Garter, the reference to it underlining the relevance of the tale to an age in which, as indicated by the Round Tables actually held by Edward III (the founder of the Order of the Garter), there was a serious interest in maintaining and reviving Arthurian chivalry, which was far from an outmoded ideal.¹⁴ The motto itself returns any derision or contempt directed at the order on the evil-thinker himself, who only proves his own meanness and baseness. In the context of *Sir Gawain*, it constitutes a warning against

responding to the tale with contempt for chivalric aspirations, regarding them as based upon a lie, for men cannot and do not live up to the chivalric ideal. Anyone who so interprets the tale, it is implied, brings more shame to himself than to the chivalric ethos, whose aims and ideals are worthy ones, though they can never be perfectly lived up to by human beings who are not, by definition, superhuman. Gawain was guilty of a small weakness, but to all others in the story his conduct proves him to be someone to honour and emulate. As to the chivalric ideal, the poem warns us not to think it can do all it sets out to do, but not on those grounds to despise it: that is what the end of the story and the motto in effect say about chivalry – which, in the alternate panegyric and derision the institution has attracted, is a peculiarly sane verdict, endorsing the romance ethos, but with a rather unromance-like soberness and caution.

Recommended Further Reading: Borroff 1962; Benson 1965; Burrow 1965; Spearing 1970: 171–236; Millett 1994; Putter 1996: 38–102; Pearsall 1997; Burrow 2001: 42–54; Mann 2009

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

FITT I

SITHEN the sege and the **assaut** was sesed at
Troye,
The burgh brittened and brent to brondes
and askes,
The tulk that the trammes of tresoun there
wroghte
Was tried for his trecherye, the truest on
erthe:

- 5 Hit was Ennias the athel and his highe kynde
That sithen depresed provinces and
patrounes become
Wel negh of all the wele in the west iles.
Fro riche Romulus to Rome riches him
swythe,
With gret bobaunce that burgh he **bigges**
upon firste
- 10 And nevenes hit his owne name, as hit now
hatte;
Ticius to Tuskan and teldes begins,
Langaberde in Lumbardie lyftes up homes;
And fer over the French flod Felix Brutus
On mony bonkes ful brode Bretayn he settes

- 15 With wyne,
 Where werre and wrake and wonder
 By sythes has wont thereinne,
 And oft both blisse and blunder
 Ful skete has skyfted synne.
- 20 And when this Bretayn was bigged by this
burn riche,
Bolde **bredden** thereinne **baret** that **lofden**,
In mony turned tyme tene that wroghten.
Mo ferlyes on this **folde** haf fallen here ofte
Then in any other that I wot syn that ilk
tyme.
- 25 Bot of all that here bult, of Bretaygne kynges,
Aye was Arthur the hendest, as I have herde
telle.
Forthy an **aunter** in erde I **attle** to schewe,
That a **selly** in sight summe men hit holden
And an outrage aventure of Arthures
wonderes.
- 30 If ye wil lysten this laye bot on little while,
I schal telle hit as tite, as I in toun herde
 With tonge,
 As hit is stad and stoken
 In stori stiffe and stronge,
- 35 With lele lettres loken
 In londe so has ben longe.

This kyng lay at Camylot upon Cristmasse,
With mony **luflyche** lord, ledes of the beste,
Rekenly of the Rounde Table all tho rich
brether,

40 With rich revel aryght and [rechlesse](#) mirthes.
There tournayed tulkes by tymes ful mony,
[Justed](#) ful [jolily](#) these [gentyle](#) knightes,
Sithen kayred to the court [caroles](#) to make.
For there the fest was ilyche ful fiftene
dayes,

45 With all the mete and the mirthe that men
couth [advise](#).

Such glam and gle glorious to here,
Dere dyn upon day, [daunsyng](#) on nightes:
All was hap upon high in halles and
chambres
With lordes and ladies, as levest hem
thoghte.

50 With all the wele of the world thay woned
there samen,
The most kyd knightes under Crystes selven,
And the lovelokkest ladies that ever lif
haden,
And he the comlokest kyng that the court
holdes.

For all was this fayre folk in her first age

55 On sille,
The hapnest under heven,
Kyng highest man of wille;
Hit were now gret nye to neven
So hardy a [here](#) on hille.

60 While New Yere was so [yep](#) that hit was
newe comen,
That day double on the dese was the douth
served.

- Fro the kyng was comen with knightes into
the halle,
The chauntry of the chapel cheved to an
ende,
Loude cry was there cast of clerkes and
other,
65 'Nowel!' nayted onewe, nevened ful ofte;
And sithen riche forth runnen to reche
hanselle,
Yeyed yeres-yiftes on high, yelde hem by
hande,
Debated busily aboute tho giftes;
Ladies laghed ful loude thogh thay lost
haden,
70 And he that wan was not wroth, that may ye
wel trowe.
All this mirthe thay maden to the mete tyme.
When thay had waschen worthily thay
wenten to sete,
The beste burn aye above, as hit best semed,
Quene Guenore ful gay graythed in the
myddes, –
75 Dressed on the dere dese, dubbed all aboute,
Smal sendal bisides, a selure her over,
Of tried tolouse, of tars, tapites inoghe,
That were enbrawdred and beten with the
best gemmes
That myght be proved of pris with penies to
bye
80 In day:
The comlokest to discrye

There glent with iyen gray;
A semloker that ever he sye
Soth myght no man say.

85 Bot Arthur wolde not **ete** til alle were served,
He was so joly of his joyfnes and sumwhat
child-gered:

His lif liked him lyght, he loved the lesse
Other to longe lye or to longe sitte,
So **busied** him his yonge blod and his brayn
wylde.

90 And also an other **maner** meved him **eke**,
That he thurgh **nobelay** had nomen: he
wolde never ete

Upon such a dere day ere him **devised** were
Of sum **aventurus** thing an uncouth tale,
Of sum **mayn** mervayl that he myght trowe,

95 Of alderes, of armes, of other adventures, –
Other sum segge him **bisoght** of sum **siker**
knighte

To **joyne** with him in **justyng**, in **joparde** to
laye,

Lede, lif for lif, **leve** uchone other,
As fortune wolde **fylsen** hem, the fayrer to
have.

100 This was the kynges **countenaunce** where he
in court were

At uch farande fest among his fre meyny
In halle:

Therefore of face so **fere**
He stightles stif in stalle,

105 Ful yep in that New Yere;

Much mirthe he **mas** withalle.

Thus there standes in stalle the stif kyng
himselfen,

Talkande before the highe table of trifles ful
hende,

There good Gawan was graythed Guenore
biside,

110 And Agravayn a la dure mayn on that other
side sittes,

Bothe the kynges sistersunes and ful siker
knightes.

Bischof Bawdewyn above begins the table,
And Ywan, Uryn son, ete with himselfen.

These were dight on the dese and **derworthly**
served,

115 And sithen many siker segge at the side-
bordes.

Then the first course com with **crakkyng** of
trumpes,

With many **baner** ful bryght that thereby
henged;

Newe nakryne noyse with the noble pipes,
Wylde **verbles** and wight, wakened lote,

120 That many hert ful high hef at her touches;
Dayntyes driven therewith of ful dere metes,
Foysoun of the fresch, and on so fele disches
That pine to fynde the place the peple before
For to sette the sylveren that sere sewes
holden

125 On clothe.

Uch lede as he loved himselve

There laght withouten lothe;
Aye two had disches twelve,
Good **ber** and bryght wyne bothe.

130 Now wil I of her servyce say yow no more,
For uch we may wel wit no **wont** that there
were.

An other noyse ful newe neghed bylive,
That the lede myght have **leve** liflode to
cache;

For **unethe** was the noyse not a while sesed
135 And the first course in the court kyndely
served,

There hales in at the halle dor an **awelich**
mayster,
On the most on the molde on **mesure** highe,
—

Fro the swyre to the **swange** so sware and so
thikke,

And his **lyndes** and his lymmes so long and
so grete,

140 Half **etayn** in erde I hope that he were;
Bot man most I **algate** mynne him to bene, —
And that the meriest in his muckel that
myght ever ride:

For of bak and of brest all were his body
sturne,

Bot his wombe and his **wast** were worthily
smale,

145 And all his fetures folwande, in forme that he
hade,

Ful clene.

Forwonder of his hue men hade,
 Set in his semblaunt sene:
 He ferde as freke were fade,
 150 And overal enker grene.

And all graythed in grene this gome and his
 wedes:
 A strayt cote ful streght that stek on his
 sides,
 A mery mantyle above, mensked withinne
 With pelure pured apert, the pane ful clene,
 155 With blythe blaunner ful bryght, and his
 hode bothe,
 That was laght fro his lokkes and layd on his
 schulderes;
 Heme wel-haled hose of hue that same
 grene,
 That spenned on his sparlyr, and clene
 spures under
 Of bryght gold upon silk bordes barred ful
 riche;
 160 And scholes under schankes there the schalk
 rides.
 And all his vesture verayly was clene
 verdure,
 Both the barres of his belt and other blythe
 stones,
 That were richely rayled in his aray clene
 Aboute himself and his sadel upon silk
 werkes, –
 165 That were to tor for to telle of trifles the
 halve

That were enbrawd above, with bryddes
and flyes,

With gay **gaudi** of grene, the gold aye in-
myddes.

The **pendauntes** of his payttrure, the proude
cropure,

His molaynes and all the **metail** enaumayld
was thenne,

170 The stiropes that he stod on **stayned** of the
same,

And his **arsouns** all after and his athel
skyrtes,

That ever **glemered** and glent all of grene
stones;

The **fole** that he ferkes on fyne of that ilke
Sertayn:

175 A grene horse, gret and thik,
A **stede** ful stif to strayn;
In brayden **brydel** quik,
To the gome he was ful **gayn**.

Wel gay was this gome gered in grene,

180 And the hayre of his hed of his horse sute;
Fayr fannande fax **umbe-foldes** his
schulderes;

A much berd as a **busk** over his brest henges,
That with his **highliche** hayre that of his hed
reches

Was **evesed** all **umbe-torne** above his
elbowes,

185 That half his armes thereunder were halched
in the wyse

Of a knyghtes **capados** that closes his swyre;
The mane of that mayn horse much to hit
like,

Wel cresped and **cemmed**, with knottes ful
mony,

Folden in with fildore aboute the fayre
grene,

190 Aye a **herle** of the hayre, an other of golde;
The **tayl** and his **toppyng twynnen** of a sute,
And bounden both with a bande of a bryght
grene,

Dubbed with ful dere stones as the dok
lasted,

Sithen throwen with a **thwong**, a thwarle
knot alofte,

195 There mony belles ful bryght of brende gold
rungen.

Such a fole upon folde ne freke that him
rides

Was never sene in that sale with sight ere
that tyme

With iye.

He loked as layt so lyght,

200 So sayd all that him sye;

Hit semed as no man myght

Under his dintes drye.

Whether had he no **helme** ne **hauberghe**
nauther,

Ne no pysan ne no **plate** that pented to
armes,

205 Ne no **schafft** ne no **schelde** to **schowve** ne to

smyte.

Bot in his on hand he had a holyn bobbe,
That is grettest in grene when greves are
bare,

And an axe in his other, a huge and unmete,
A **spitous** sparthe to expoun in spelle, whoso
myghte:

210 The hed of an elnyerde the large lenthe hade,
The grayn all of grene **stele** and of gold
hewen,

The **bitte** burnist bryght, with a brod egge,
As wel schapen to **schere** as **scharpe rases**;
The **stele** of a stif **staf** the sturne hit by
gripped,

215 That was **wounden** with **yrn** to the wandes
ende

And all **bigraven** with grene in gracious
werkes,

A **lace** lapped aboute, that louked at the
hede

And so after the **halme** halched ful ofte,
With tried **tasseles** thereto tached inoghe

220 On **botouns** of the bryght grene brayden ful
riche.

This hathel heldes him in and the halle
entres,

Drivande to the high dese, **dut** he no wothe.
Haylsed he never one, bot high he **overlooked**.
The first word that he warp, 'Where is,' he
sayde,

225 'The **governour** of this gyng? **Gladly** I wolde

See that segge in sight and with himself
speke

Resoun.'

To knightes he cast his iye
And reled hem up and down;
230 He **stemmed** and con **studie**
Who walt there most renoun.

There was **lokyng** on lenthe the lede to
beholde,

For uch man had mervayl what hit mene
myghte

That a hathel and a horse myght such a hue
lache

235 As grow grene as the gresse and grener hit
semed,

Then grene **aumayl** on gold glowande
bryghter.

All studied that there stod and stalked him
nerre

With all the wonder of the world what he
work schulde.

For fele sellyes had thay sene, bot such never
ere;

240 Forthy for **fantoum** and **fayrye** the folk there
hit demed.

Therefore to answare was **arwe** mony athel
freke,

And all **stouned** at his steven and **stone-stille**
seten

In a **swoghe sylence** thurgh the sale riche;
As all were slypped on slepe so slaked her

lotes

245 In **hye**.

I deme hit not all for **doute**,
Bot sum for courtaysye;
Bot let him that all schuld **loute**
Cast unto that wye.

250 Then Arthur before the high dese that
aventure beholdes,
And rekenly him **reverenced**, for rad was he
never,

And sayd, 'Wye, welcom i wysse to this place.
The hed of this **hostel** Arthur I hatte.

Lyght lovely adoun and leng, I thee praye,

255 And whatso thy wille is we schal wit after.'
'Nay, as help me,' quoth the hathel, 'He that
on high sittes,

To wone any while in this won hit was not
myn ernde, –

Bot for the **los** of thee, lede, is lyft up so
highe,

And thy burgh and thy burnes best are
holden,

260 Stifest under **stele-gere** on stedes to ride,
The wyghtest and the worthyest of the
worldes kynde,

Preue for to play with in other pure laykes,
And here is kyd courtaysye, as I have herde
carpe;

And that has wayned me hider, i wysse, at
this tyme.

265 Ye may be siker by this braunch that I bere

here

That I passe as in pese and no plyt seche.
For had I founded in fere in fyghtynges wyse,
I have a hauberghe at home and a helme
bothe,

A schelde and a scharp spere schinande
bryghte,

270 And other weppenes to welde, I wene wel,
alse;

Bot for I wolde no werre, my wedes are
softer.

Bot if thou be so bold as all burnes tellen,
Thou wil grant me godly the game that I
aske

By right.'

275 Arthur con answare
And sayd, 'Sir cortays knight,
If thou crave batayl bare,
Here fayles thou not to fyght.'

'Nay, frayste I no fyght, in fayth I thee telle:
280 Hit are aboute on this bench bot berdlesse
childer;

If I were hasped in armes on a high stede,
Here is no man me to mach, for myghtes so
wayke.

Forthy I crave in this court a Cristemas
game,

For hit is Yol and New Yere and here are yep
mony.

285 If any so hardy in this house holdes
himselven,

Be so bold in his blod, **brayn** in his hede,
That dar stiflyche **strike** a stroke for another,
I schal **gif** him of my gift this **giserne** riche,
This axe, that is **hevy** inogh, to **hondel** as
him likes;

290 And I schal bide the first bur as bare as I
sitte.

If any freke be so felle to fonde that I telle,
Lepe lyghtly me to and lache this weppen –
I quit-clayme hit for ever, **kepe** hit as his
owne –

And I schal stande him a stroke stif on this
flete,

295 Elles thou wil dight me the dome to dele him
an other,

Barlay,

And yet gif him respite

A **twelmonyth** and a day.

Now hye, and let see tite

300 Dar any hereinne oght say.'

If he hem stouned upon first, stiller were
thenne

All the heredmen in halle, the high and the
lowe.

The renk on his rounce him riched in his
sadel,

And runischly his red iyen he reled aboute,

305 **Bende** his bresed browes **blykkande** grene,
Wayved his berd for to wayte whoso wolde
rise.

When non wolde kepe him with carp, he

coghed ful highe,

And rimed him ful richly and **ryght** him to
speke.

‘What, is this Arthures house,’ quoth the
hathel thenne,

310 ‘That all the rous rennes of thurgh ryalmes so
mony?

Where is now your **sorquydrye** and your
conquestes,

Your **gryndellayk** and your greme and your
grete wordes?

Now is the revel and the renoun of the
Rounde Table

Overwalt with a word of on wyes speche,

315 For all dares for drede withoute dint
schewed!’

With this he laghes so loude that the lord
greved:

The blod schotte for schame into his schyre
face

And lere;

He wex as wroth as wynd,

320 So did all that there were;

The kyng, as kene by kynde,

Then stod that stif man nere.

And sayd, ‘Hathel, by heven, thyn **askyng** is
nice,

And as thou folly has frayst, fynde thee
behoves, –

325 I know no gome that is gast of thy grete
wordes.

Gif me now thy giserne, upon Godes halve,
And I schal baythen thy bone that thou
boden habbes.'

Lyghtly lepes he him to and laght at his
hande;

Then fersly that other freke upon fote
lyghtes.

330 Now has Arthur his axe and the halme
grippes,

And sturnely stures hit aboute, that strike
with hit thoghte.

The stif man him before stod upon hyghte,
Herre then any in the house by the hed and
more;

With sturne chere there he stod he stroked
his berde,

335 And with a countenaunce drye he drow down
his cote,

No more mate ne dismayd for his mayn
dintes

Then any burn upon bench had broght him
to drynke

Of wyne.

340 Gawan, that sat by the quene,
To the kyng he con enclyne:
'I beseche now with sawes sene
This melly mot be myne.

'Wolde ye, worthilyche lord,' quoth Wawan
to the kynge,

'Bid me bow fro this bench and stande by
yow there,

345 That I withoute vilany myght **voyde** this
table,
And that my lege lady liked not ille,
I wolde come to your counsel before your
court riche.
For me think hit not semely, as hit is soth
knownen,
There such an askyng is hevened so high in
your sale,
350 Thagh ye yourself be **talentyf**, to take hit to
yourselven,
While mony so bold yow aboute upon bench
sitten,
That under heven, I hope, none hawerer of
wille,
Ne better bodyes on bent there baret is
rered.
I am the wakkest, I wot, and of wyt feblest,
355 And lest **lur** of my lif, who laytes the sothe.
Bot for as much as ye are myn em I am only
to prayse:
No bounte bot your blod I in my body
knowe.
And sithen this note is so nice that not hit
yow falles,
And I have frayned hit at yow first, foldes hit
to me.
360 And if I carp not comlyly, let all this court
riche
Bout blame.'
Riche togeder con **roun**,

And sithen thay redden all same
 To **ryd** the kyng with crowne
 365 And gif Gawayn the game.

 Then comaunded the kyng the knight for to
 rise,
 And he ful radly up ros and riched him fayre,
 Kneled down before the kyng and caches that
 weppen,
 And he luflyly hit him laft and lyfte up his
 hande
 370 And gave him Godes blessing and gladly him
 biddes
 That his hert and his hand schuld hardy be
 bothe.
 ‘Kepe thee, cosyn,’ quoth the kyng, ‘that thou
 on **kyrf** sette;
 And if thou redes him right, **redily** I trowe
 That thou schal bide the bur that he schal
 bede after.’
 375 Gawan gos to the gome with giserne in
 hande,
 And he **baldly** him bides, he **bayst** never the
 helder.
 Then carpes to Sir Gawan the knight in the
 grene:
 ‘Refourme we our forwardes ere we ferre
 passe.
 First I **ethe** thee, hathel, how that thou hattes
 380 That thou me telle truly as I tryst may.’
 ‘In good fayth,’ quoth the good
 knight, ‘Gawan I hatte

That bede thee this buffet, whatso befallles
after,
And at this tyme twelmonyth take at thee an
other,
With what weppen so thou wilt, and with no
weye elles

385 On lyve.’
That other answare agayn:
‘Sir Gawan, so mot I thryve
As I am ferly fayn
This dint that thou schal drive.’

390 ‘By Gog,’ quoth the grene knight, ‘Sir Gawan,
me likes
That I schal fonge at thy fyste that I have
frayst here;
And thou has redily rehersed by resoun ful
true
Clanly all the covenant that I the kyng
asked, –
Save that thou schal siker me, segge, by thy
trauthe,

395 That thou schal sech me thyself whereso
thou hopes
I may be founde upon folde, and fech thee
such wages
As thou deles me today before this douth
riche.’
‘Where schuld I wale thee?’ quoth
Gawan. ‘Where is thy place?
I wot never where thou wones, by Him that
me wroghte,

400 Ne I know not thee, knight, thy court ne thy
name.

Bot tech me truly thereto and tell me how
thou hattes,

And I schal **ware** all my wit to wyinne me
thider, –

And that I **swere** thee for sothe and by my
siker trauthe.’

‘That is inogh in New Yere, hit **nedes** no
more,’

405 Quoth the gome in the grene to Gawan the
hende;

‘If I thee telle truly, when I the **tappe** have
And thou me smothely has smyten, **smartly** I
thee teche

Of my house and my home and myn owne
name, –

Then may thou frayste my fare and
forwardes holde.

410 And if I spende no speche, then spedes thou
the better,

For thou may leng in thy londe and layte no
ferre.

Bot slokes!

Ta now thy grym tole to thee

And let se how thou **cnokes**.’

415 ‘Gladly, sir, for sothe,’

Quoth Gawan; his axe he strokes.

The grene knight upon grounde graythly him
dresses,

A little **lut** with the hed, the **lyre** he

discovers;

His long, luflyche lokkes he layd over his
crowne,

420 Let the nakede nek to the note schewe.

Gawan gripped to his axe and gederes hit on
hyghte,

The kay fote on the folde he before sette,

Let hit doun lyghtly lyght on the naked,

That the scharp of the schalk **schyndered** the
bones

425 And **schrunk** thurgh the schyre **gres** and
schede hit in twynne,

That the bitte of the broun stele bote on the
grounde.

The fayr hed fro the **halse** hit to the erthe,

That fele hit foyned with her fete there hit
forth rolled;

The blod brayd fro the body, that blykked on
the grene –

430 And nauther faltered ne fel the freke never
the helder,

Bot **stythly** he start forth upon stif schankes,
And runischly he raght out, thereas renkes
stoden,

Laght to his lovely hed and lyft hit up sone,

And sithen bowes to his **blonk**, the brydel he
caches,

435 **Steppes** into **stele-bawe** and strydes alofte,

And his hed by the hayre in his hande
holdes;

And as **sadly** the segge him in his sadel sette

As non unhap had him ayled, thagh hedles
he were

In stedde.

440 He brayd his bluk aboute,
That ugly body that bledde;
Mony one of him had doute
By that his resouns were redde.

For the hed in his hande he holdes up even,
445 Toward the derrest on the dese he dresses
the face,

And hit lyft up the iye-lyddes and loked ful
brode

And meled thus much with his mouth as ye
may now here:

‘Loke, Gawan, thou be grayth to go as thou
hettes,

And layte also lelly til thou me, lede, fynde

450 As thou has hyght in this halle, herande
these knightes.

To the Grene Chapel thou chose, I charge
thee, to fette

Such a dint as thou has dalt: disserved thou
habbes

To be yederly yolden on New Yeres morne.

The Knight of the Grene Chapel, men
knownen me mony:

455 Forthy me for to fynde if thou fraystes fayles
thou never.

Therefore com, or recreaunt be called thee
behoves.’

With a runische rout the raynes he turnes,

Haled out at the halle dor, his hed in his
hande,

That the fire of the flynt flewe fro fole **hoves**.

460 To what kyth he becom knewe non there,
Never more then thay wyste from **whethen**
he was wonnen.

What then?

The kyng and Gawan **thare**

At that grene thay laghe and **grenne**;

465 Yet breved was hit ful bare
A mervayl among tho men.

Thagh Arthur the hende kyng at hert hade
wonder,

He let no semblaunt be sene, bot sayde ful
highe

To the comlyche quene with cortayse speche:

470 ‘Dere dame, today **dismay** you never:

Wel becomes such craft upon Cristmasse –

Laykyng of enterludes, to **laghe** and to synge,

Among these kynde caroles of knightes and
ladies.

Neverthelesse to my mete I may me wel
dresse,

475 For I have sene a selly, I may not **forsake**.’

He glent upon Sir Gawan and **gaynly** he
sayde:

‘Now, sir, heng up thyn axe, that has inogh
hewen.’ –

And hit was done above the dese on doser to
henge,

There all men for mervayl myght on hit loke

480 And by true tyle thereof to telle the wonder.
Then thay bowed to a borde, these burnes
togeder –
The kyng and the good knight – and kene men
hem served
Of all dayntyes double, as derrest myght
falle.
With all maner of mete and mynstralsye
bothe,
485 With wele walt thay that day, til worthed an
ende
In londe.
Now thenk wel, Sir Gawayn,
For wothe that thou ne wonde
This aunter for to [frayn](#)
490 That thou has tan on honde.

FITT II

THIS hanselle has Arthur of aventures on
firste,
In yong yere, for he yerned [yelpyng](#) to here;
Thagh him wordes were [wane](#) when thay to
sete wenten,
Now are thay stoken of sturne werk, stafful
her hande.
495 Gawan was glad to begynne those gamnes in
halle,
Bot thagh the ende be hevy, haf ye no
wonder;
For thagh men ben mery in mynde when
thay haf mayn drinke,

A yere **yernes** ful yerne and yeldes never
like:

The forme to the **fynisment** foldes ful seldom.

500 Forthy this Yol overyede, and the yere after,
And uch sesoun serlepes sued after other.

After Cristenmas com the **crabbede** Lentoun,
That fraystes flesch with the fische and fode
more **symple**;

Bot then the **weder** of the world with wynter
hit **threpes**:

505 Colde **clenges** adoun, cloudes up lyften,
Schyre schedes the rayn in **showres** ful
warme,

Falles upon fayr flat, **flowres** there schewen,
Bothe groundes and the greves, grene are her
weddes;

Bryddes busken to **bylde**, and bremlyche
syngen

510 For solace of the softe somer that sues
thereafter

By bonk;

And **blossumes** bolne to **blowe**

By **rawes** rich and **ronk**;

Then notes noble inowe

515 Are herde in wode so wlonk.

After the **sesoun** of somer with the soft
wyndes,

When Zeferus **syfles** himself on sedes and
erbes,

Welawynne is the **wort** that waxes **thereoute**,
When the donkande dew **dropes** of the leves,

520 To **bide** a blysfyl **blusch** of the bryght sunne.
 Bot then hyes Hervest and **hardenes** him
 sone,
Warnes him for the wynter to **waxe** ful ripe.
 He drives with droght the **dust** for to rise,
 Fro the face of the folde to **flye** ful highe.
 525 Wroth wynd of the welkyn **wrasteles** with
 the sunne,
 The leves lausen fro the **lynde** and lyghten
 on the grounde,
 And all grayes the gresse that grene was ere;
 Then all **rypes** and rotes that ros upon firste,
 And thus **yernes** the yere in yisterdayes
 mony,
 530 And wynter wyndes agayn, as the world
 askes
 No fage,
 Til Meghelmasse mone
 Was comen with wynter wage.
 Then thenkes Gawan ful sone
 535 Of his **anious** vyage.

 Yet while Alhalday with Arthur he lenges,
 And he made a fare on that fest for the frekes
 sake,
 With much revel and rich of the Rounde
 Table.
 Knightes ful cortays and comlyche ladies,
 540 All for luf of that lede in longing thay were;
 Bot never the lesse ne the later thay nevened
 bot mirthe:
 Mony joyles for that gentyl japes there

maden.

For after mete with mournyng he meles to
his eme,

And spekes of his passage and **pertly** he
sayde:

545 'Now, lege lord of my lif, leve I yow aske.

Ye knowe the **cost** of this case: kepe I no
more

To telle yow tenes thereof, never bot **trifle**;

Bot I am boun to the bur **barely tomorne**,

To sech the gome of the grene as God wil me
wysse.'

550 Then the best of the burgh bowed togeder –

Ywan and Errik, and other ful mony,

Sir Doddinaual de Savage, the Duk of
Clarence,

Lancelot and Lyonel and Lucan the goode,

Sir Boors and Sir Bydver, bigge men bothe,

555 And many other menskful, with Mador de la
Porte;

All this compayny of court com the kyng
nerre,

For to **counseyl** the knight, with care at her
herte.

There was much derne doel driven in the
sale

That so worthy as Wawan schuld wende on
that ernde,

560 To drye a delful dint and dele no more

With bronde.

The knight made aye good chere,

And sayd, ‘What schuld I wonde?
Of destines **derf and dere**
565 What may man do bot fonde?’

He dwelles there all that day, and dresses on
the morne,
Askes erly his armes, and all were thay
broghte:
First, a **tuly tapit** tyght over the flete,
And much was the gilde gere that glent
there-aloft;
570 The stif man steppes thereon, and the stele
hondeles,
Dubbed in a **dublet** of a dere tarse,
And sithen a **crafty** capados, closed alofte,
That with a bryght blaunner was bounden
withinne;
Then set thay the sabatouns upon the segge
fotes;
575 His legges lapped in stele with luflyche
greves,
With polaynes picked thereto, polysed ful
clene,
Aboute his knes knaged with knottes of
golde;
Queme quyssewes then, that coyntlyche
closed
His **thik-throwen thyes** with thwonges to
tached;
580 And sithen the **brayden bruny**, of bryght stele
rynges,
Umbe-weved that wye, upon wlonk **stuffe**,

And wel burnist brace upon his bothe armes,
With good cowters and gay, and gloves of
plate,
And all the **godlyche** gere that him **gayn**
schulde

585 That tyde, –

With riche **cote-armure**,
His gold spures **spend** with pryde,
Gurde with a bronde ful sure
With silk **saynt** umbe his side.

590 When he was hasped in armes, his **harnays**
was riche:

The **lest lachet** over **loupe** lemed of golde.
So **harnayst** as he was, he herknes his Masse,
Offred and honoured at the highe auter.
Sithen he comes to the kyng and to his court
feres,

595 Laches lovely his leve at lordes and ladies,
And thay him kysten and conveyed, bikende
him to Cryste.

By that was Gryngolet grayth, and **gurde**
with a sadel,
That glemed ful gayly with mony golde
frenes,

Aywhere **naylet** ful new, for that note riched,

600 The brydel barred aboute, with bryght golde
bounden;

The **apparayl** of the **payttrure** and of the
proude skyrtes,

The cropure and the covertor, acorded with
the arsounes:

And all was rayled on red riche gold **nayles**,
That all glytered and glent as glem of the
sunne.

605 Then hentes he the helme and hastily hit
kysses,
That was **stapled** stifly and **stuffed** withinne;
Hit was high on his hed, hasped bihinde,
With a **lyghtly** uryoun over the aventayle,
Enbrawdenn and bounden with the best
gemmes

610 On brod **sylkyn borde**, and bryddes on semes,
As papejayes paynted peryng bitwene,
Tortors and trulofes, **entayled** so thikke
As mony burde thereabouten had ben seven
wynter

In toun.

615 The cercle was more of pris
That **umbe-clypped** his crowne,
Of **diamantes** a **devise**
That both were bryght and broun.

THEN thay schewed him the schelde, that
was of schyr **goules**,

620 With the **pentangel** depaynt of pure golde
hues.

He **braydes** hit by the **bauderyk**, aboute the
halse castes:

That bisemed the segge semlyly fayre;
And why the pentangel **apendes** to that
prince noble

I am in **tente** you to telle, thogh **tary** hit me
schulde. –

625 Hit is a **syngne** that Salomon sette sumwhyle,
In **bytoknyng** of trauthe, by **tytle** that hit
habbes:

For hit is a figure that holdes fyve poyntes,
And uch **lyne umbe-lappes** and **loukes** in
other,

And aywhere hit is **endeles**, and **Englych** hit
callen

630 Overal, as I here, the endeles knotte.

Forthy hit acordes to this knight and to his
clere armes:

For, aye faythful in fyve and sere fyve sythes,
Gawan was for good knowen, and as gold
pured

Voyded of uch vilany, with vertues enurned

635 In mote.

Forthy the pentangel new

He bere in schelde and cote,

As tulk of tale most true

And gentylest knight of lote.

640 First he was founden fautles in his fyve
wyttes;

And eft fayled the freke never in his fyve
fynGRES;

And all his afyaunce upon folde was in the
fyve woundes

That Cryst **caght** on the **cros**, as the Crede
telles;

And wheresoever this man in melly was
stadde,

645 His thro thoght was in that, thurgh all other

thinges,

That all his forsnes he fong at the fyve joyes

That the hende **heven-quene** had of her
childe;

At this cause the knight comlyche hade

In the inner half of his schelde her image
depaynted,

650 That when he blusched thereto his belde
never payred.

The fyfthe fyve that I fynde that the freke
used

Was fraunchis and felawschyp **forbi** all
thinges,

His clannesse and his courtaysye croked
were never,

And pyty, that passes all poyntes – these pure
fyve

655 Were harder happed on that hathel then on
any other.

Now all these fyve sythes, for sothe, were
fettled on this knyghte,

And uchone halched in other, that **non** ende
hade,

And **fyched** upon fyve poyntes, that faylede
never,

Ne samned never in no side, ne sundrede
nauther,

660 Withouten ende at any noke, that nowhere
couthe man fynde

Where ever the game began or glod to an
ende.

Therefore on his schene schelde schapen was
the knotte,
Ryally with red gold upon red goules,
That is the pure pentangel with the peple
called

665 With **lore**.

Now graythed is Gawan gay
And laght his **launce** right thore
And gave hem all good day,
He wende for evermore.

670 He **sperred** the stede with the spures and
sprang on his waye
So stif that the **stonefire** strok out thereafter.
All that saw that semely syked in herte,
And sayd sothly all same segges til other,
Carande for that **comly**: ‘By Cryst, hit is
scathe

675 That thou, lede, schal be lost, that art of lif
noble!
To fynde his fere upon folde, in fayth, is not
ethe.
Warloker to have wrought had more wyt bene
And have dight yonder dere a duk to have
worthed;
A **lowande leder** of ledes in londe him wel
semes, –

680 And so had better have **ben** then brittened to
noghte,
Hadet with an alvisch man, for **angardes**
pryde.
Who knew ever any kyng such counsel to

take

As knightes in **cavelouns** on Cristmasse
gamnes?’

Wel much was the warme water that
waltered of iyen

685 When that semlyche syre soght fro tho wones
That day.

He made non **abode**,
Bot wightly went his way.
Mony **wylsum** way he rode,

690 The boke as I herde say.

Now rides this renk thurgh the **ryalme** of
Logres –

Sir Gawan on Godes halve, thagh him no
game thoghte:

Oft **ledeles** alone he lenges on nightes,
There he fonde not him before the fare that
he liked;

695 Had he no **fere** bot his fole by frithes and
downes,

Ne no gome bot God by gate with to carpe,
Til that he neghed ful negh into the north
Wales.

All the iles of Anglesay on lyft half he
holdes,

And fares over the fordes by the forlondes,

700 Over at the Holy Hed, til he had eft bonke
In the **wyldrenesse** of Wyrاله; woned there
bot lyte

That other God other gome with good herte
loved.

And aye he frayned as he ferde at frekes that
he mette

If thay had herde any carp of a knight grene,
705 In any grounde thereabout, of the Grene
Chapel;

And all **nikked** him with nay, that never in
her lyve

Thay saw never no segge that was of such
hues

Of grene.

The knight toke gates **straunge**
710 In mony a bonk **unbene**;
His chere ful oft con **chaunge**
That chapel ere he myght sene.

Mony clyff he **overclambe** in **contrayes**
straunge;

Fer floten fro his frendes, fremedly he rides.
715 At uch warthe other water there the wye
passed

He fonde a **fo** him before, bot ferly hit were,
—

And that so foule and so felle that fyght him
behoved.

So mony mervayl by mount there the man
fyndes

Hit were to tor for to telle of the tenthe dole:
720 Sumwhyle with wormes he **werres** and with
wolves also,

Sumwhyle with wodwos that woned in the
knarres,

Both with bulles and **beres** and bores other

while,

And etaynes that him aneleded of the highe
felle.

Nade he ben doghty and drye and Dryhtyn
had served,

725 Douteles he had ben ded and dreped ful ofte.

For werre wrathed him not so much that
wynter was worse,

When the colde cler water fro the cloudes
schadden

And fres ere hit falle myght to the fale erthe.

Nere slayn with the slete he slepte in his yrnas

730 Mo nightes then inogh, in nakede rokkes,

Thereas claterande fro the crest the colde
borne rennes

And hinged high over his hed in harde ysse-
ikkles.

Thus in peril and payne and plytes ful harde,

By countre kayres this knight til Cristenmas
even,

735 Alone.

The wye wel that tyde

To Mary made his mone,

That ho him rede to ride

And wysse him to sum wone.

740 By a mount on the morn meryly he rides
Into a forest ful depe, that ferly was wylde:
High hilles on uch a halve, and holtwodes
under

Of hore okes ful huge, a hundred togeder;

The hasel and the hawthorne were harled all

samen,

745 With rogh, raged mosse rayled aywhere,
With mony bryddes unblythe upon bare
twyges,

That pitously there piped for pine of the
colde.

The gome upon Gryngolet glydes hem under,
Thurgh mony misy and myre, man all him
one,

750 Carande for his costes, lest he ne kever
schulde

To see the servyce of that Syre that on that
self nighte

Of a burde was born our baret to quelle;
And therefore sykyng he sayd: 'I beseche
thee, Lorde,

And Mary, that is myldest moder so dere,

755 Of sum herber there highly I myght here
Masse

And thy Matynes tomorne, mekely I aske,
And thereto prestly I pray my Pater and Ave
And Crede.'

He rode in his prayere

760 And cryed for his mysdede;
He sayned him in sythes sere,
And sayd, 'Cros Cryst me spede!'

NADE he sayned himself, segge, bot thrye,
Ere he was ware in the wode of a won in a
mote,

765 Above a launde, on a lawe loken under
boghes

Of mony **borlyche** bole aboute by the diches

—

A **castel** the comlokest that ever knight
aghte,

Piched on a prayere, a park all aboute

With a **pyked palays** pyned ful thikke

770 That **umbe-teye** mony tre mo then two myle.

That holde on that on side the hathel avised,

As hit **schemered** and schon thurgh the
schyre okes.

Then has he hendly of his helme and highly
he thonkes

Jesus and Saynt Gilyan, that gentyl are
bothe,

775 That courtaysye had him kyd and his cry
herkened.

‘Now, bone hostel,’ quoth the burn, ‘I
beseche yow yete.’

Then gederes he to Gryngolet with the **gilt**
heles

And he ful **chauncely** has chosen to the chef
gate

That broght bremly the burn to the brygge
ende

780 In haste.

The brygge was breme up brayde,

The yates were stoken faste;

The walles were wel arayed:

Hit dut no wyndes **blaste**.

785 The burn bode on bonk, that on blonk hoved,
Of the depe double dich that drof to the

place.

The wal **wod** in the water wonderly depe,
And eft a ful huge hyght hit haled upon
lofte,

Of **hard-hewen** stone up to the tables,

790 Enbaned under the **abataylment** in the best
lawe,

And sithen garytes ful gay gered bitwene,
With mony luflyche loupe that louked ful
clene:

A better barbican that burn blusched upon
never.

And innermore he behelde that halle ful
highe,

795 Towres telded bitwene, troched ful thikke,
Fayre fylyoles that fyed and ferlyly longe,
With corven coprounes **craftyly sleye**;
Chalk-white chymnees there chese he
inoghe,

Upon bastel-**roves** that blenked ful white:

800 So mony **pinacle paynted** was powdered
aywhere,

Among the castel carneles clambred so
thikke,

That pared out of paper purely hit semed.

The fre freke on the fole hit fayr inoghe
thoghte,

If he myght kever to come the cloyster
withinne,

805 To **herber** in that hostel while halyday lasted,
Avinaunt.

He called, and sone there come
A **porter** pure plesaunt;
On the wal his ernd he nome
810 And haylsed the knight erraunt.

‘Good sir,’ quoth Gawan, ‘woldes thou go
myn ernde
To the high lord of this house, herber to
crave?’
‘Ye, Peter,’ quoth the porter, ‘and purely I
trowe
That ye be wye welcom to wone while yow
likes.’
815 Then yede him the yateward, and com ayain
swythe,
And folk **frely** him with to **fonge** the knight.
Thay let down the grete **draght** and derely
out yede,
And kneled down on her kneis upon the colde
erthe
To **welcom** this ilk wye as worthy hem
thoghte.
820 Thay yolden him the brode yate, yarked up
wyde,
And he hem raysed rekenly, and rode over
the brygge.
Sere segges him sesed by sadel while he
lyghte,
And sithen **stabeled** his stede stif men inowe.
Knightes and swyeres comen down thenne,
825 For to brynge this burn with blisse into halle.
When he hef up his helme there hyed inowe

For to hent hit at his hande, the hende to
serven;

His bronde and his blasoun bothe thay
token.

Then haylsed he ful hendly tho hatheles
uchone,

830 And mony proud man there presed that
prince to honoure.

All hasped in his high wede to halle thay
him wonnen,

There fayr fire upon flet ferslyche brenned.

Then the lord of the lede loutes fro his
chamber,

For to mete with menske the man on the
flore;

835 He sayd, 'Ye are welcom to welde as yow
likes;

That her is all is your owne, to have at your
wille

And **welde.**'

'Grant mercy,' quoth Gawayn,

'There Cryst hit yow **foryelde.**'

840 As frekes that semed fayn

Ayther other in armes con **felde.**

Gawan **glyght** on the gome that godly him
grette,

And thought hit a bold burn that the burgh
aghte:

A huge hathel for the nones, and of high
elde;

845 Brod, bryght was his berd, and all bever

hued;

Sturne, stif on the [strythe](#), on stalworthe
schankes;

Felle face as the fire and fre of his speche –
And wel him semed, for sothe, as the segge
thoghte,

To [lede](#) a lordeschyp in lee of ledes ful
goode.

850 The lord him charred to a chamber and
chefly comaundes

To delyver him a lede, him lowly to serve;
And there were boun at his bode burnes
inowe,

That broght him to a bryght bour there
beddyng was noble –

Of cortynes of clene silk with clere gold
hemmes,

855 And covertores ful curious with comlyche
panes,

Of bryght blaunner above, enbrawdred
bisides,

Rudeles rennande on ropes, red golde
rynges,

Tapites tyght to the wowe of tuly and tarse,
And under fete on the flet of folwande sute.

860 There he was dispoyled, with speches of
mirthe,

The burn of his bruny and of his bryght
weddes.

Riche robes ful rad renkes him broghten,
For to [charge](#) and to chaunge and [chose](#) of

the beste;

Sone as he one hent and happed thereinne,
865 That sat on him semely, with **saylande**
skyrtes,

The ver by his visage verayly hit semed
Wel negh to uche hathel – all on hues
Lowande and lovely all his lymmes under –
That a comloker knight never Cryst made,

870 Hem thocht.

Whethen in world he were,
Hit semed as he **moght**
Be prince withouten pere
In felde there felle men focht.

875 A **chayer** before the **chymne**, there charcole
brenned,

Was graythed for Sir Gawan graythly with
clothes:

Whyssynes upon queldepoyntes, that
quoynte were bothe;

And then a mery mantyle was on that man
caste

Of a broun **bleaunt**, enbrawdred ful riche,

880 And fayre furred withinne with felles of the
beste,

All of **ermyn** in erde, his **hode** of the same;

And he sete in that settel semlyche riche,

And achaufed him chefly, and then his chere
mended.

Sone was telded up a table on trestes ful
fayre,

885 Clad with a clene cloth that clere white

schewed,

Sanap and salure and sylveren spones;

The wye wesch at his wille and went to his
mete;

Segges him served semely inoghe

With sere sewes and sete, sesounde of the
beste,

890 Doublefelde, as hit falles, and fele kyn
fisches:

Summe baken in bred, summe brad on the
gledes,

Summe sothen, summe in sewe, savoured
with spyces, –

And aye sawes so sleye that the segge liked.

The freke calde hit a fest ful frely and ofte,

895 Ful hendly, when all the hatheles rehayted
him at ones,

As hende:

‘This penaunce now ye take

And eft hit schal amende.’

That man much mirthe con make

900 For wyne in his hed that wende.

Then was spied and spured upon spare wyse
By privy poyntes of that prince put to
himselven,

That he beknew cortaysly of the court that
he were

That athel Arthur the hende holdes him one,

905 That is the riche, ryal kyng of the Rounde
Table –

And hit was Wawan himself that in that won

sittes,

Comen to that Cristmasse as case him then
lymped.

When the lord hade lerned that he the lede
hade,

Loude laghed he thereat, so lef hit him
thoghte;

910 And all the men in that mote maden much
joye

To apere in his presense prestly that tyme,
That all pris and **prowes** and purede thewes
Apendes to his **persoun** and praysed is ever:
Before all men upon molde his mensk is the
moste.

915 Uch segge ful softly sayd to his fere:
‘Now schal we semlyche see sleghtes of
thewes

And the **techeles** termes of **talkyng** noble;
Wich **sped** is in speche **unspurd** may we
lerne,

Syn we haf fonged that fyne fader of nurture;

920 God has geven us His grace godly, for sothe,
That such a gest as Gawan grantes us to have
When burnes blythe of His **byrth** schal sitte

And synge;

In **menyng** of maneres mere

925 This burn now schal us bryng;
I hope that may him here
Schal lerne of **luf-talkyng**.’

By that the **diner** was **done** and the dere
uppe,

Hit was negh at the night neghed the tyme:
 930 Chaplaynes to the chapeles chosen the gate,
 Rungen ful richly, right as thay schulde,
 To the hersum evensong of the highe tyde.
 The lord loutes thereto, and the lady also;
 Into a comly closet coyntly ho entres.
 935 Gawan glydes ful gay and gos thider sone;
 The lord laches him by the lappe and ledes
 him to sitte,
 And couthly him knowes and calles him his
 name,
 And sayd he was the welcomest wye of the
 worlde;
 And he him thonkked throlly, and ayther
 halched other,
 940 And seten soberly samen the servyce while.
 Then lyste the lady to loke on the knyghte;
 Then com ho of her closet with mony clere
 burdes:
 Ho was the fayrest in felle – of flesch and of
 lere,
 And of compas and colour, and costes – of all
 other,
 945 And wener then Wenore, as the wye thoghte.
 Ho chese thurgh the chaunsel to cherisch
 that hende.
 An other lady her lad by the lyft hande,
 That was alder then ho: an auncian hit
 semed,
 And highly honoured with hatheles aboute.
 950 Bot unlyke on to loke tho ladies were:

For if the yonge was yep, yolwe was that
other;
Rich red on that one rayled aywhere;
Rogh, ronkled chekes that other on rolled;
Kerchofes of that one, with mony cler perles,

—

- 955 Her brest and her bryght throte, bare
displayed,
Schon schyrer then snaw that schedes on
hilles;
That other with a gorger was gered over the
swyre,
Chymbled over her blake chyn with chalk-
white vayles,
Her frount folden in silk, enfoubled aywhere,
960 Toret and treleted with trifles aboute,
That noght was bare of that burde bot the
blake browes,
The twayne iyen and the nase the nakede
lyypes, —
And those were soure to see and sellyly
blered;
A mensk lady on mold man may her calle,
965 For goode!
Her body was schort and thik,
Her buttokes balwe and brode;
More lykkerwys on to lik
Was that scho had on lode.

- 970 When Gawan glyght on that gay that
graciously looked,
With leve laght of the lord, he lut hem

agaynes.

The alder he haylses, heldande ful lowe;
The loveloker he lappes a little in armes;
He kysses her comlyly and knyghtly he
meles;

975 Thay callen him of aquoyntaunce, and he hit
quik asks

To be her servant sothly, if hemself liked.

Thay tan him bitwene hem, with talkyng him
leden

To chamber, to chymne, and chefly thay
asken

Spyces that unsparely men speded hem to
brynge,

980 And the wynnelyche wyne therewith uche
tyme.

The lord luflych aloft lepes ful ofte,
Mynned mirthe to be made upon mony
sythes,

Hent highly of his hode and on a spere
henged

And wayned hem to wyne the worschip
thereoffe

985 That most mirthe myght meve that
Cristenmas while,

‘And I schal fonde, by my fayth, to fylder
with the beste

Ere me wonte the wedes, with help of my
frendes.’

Thus with laghande lotes the lord hit tayt
makes,

For to glade Sir Gawan with gamnes in halle
990 That night,
Til that hit was tyme
The lord comaunded lyght;
Gawayn his leve con nyme
And to his bed him dight.

995 On the morn as uch man mynes that tyme
That Dryhtyn for our destine to die was
borne,
Wele waxes in uch a won in worlde for his
sake;
So did hit there on that day thurgh dayntyas
mony:
Both at messe and at mele, messes ful
quoynte

1000 Derf men upon dese dressed of the beste.
The olde auncian wyf, highest ho sittes,
The lord lovely her by lent, as I trowe,
Gawan and the gay burde togeder thay seten,
—

Even in the myddes as the messe metely
come,

1005 And sithen thurgh all the sale, as hem best
semed.
By uch gome at his degre graythly was
served,
There was mete, there was mirthe, there was
much joye,
That for to telle thereof hit me tene were,
And to poynte hit yet I pined
me paraventure.

1010 Bot yet I wot that Wawan and the wale burde
Such comfort of her compayny caghten
togeder, –
Thurgh her dere **dalyaunce** of her derne
wordes,
With clene, cortays carp closed fro fylthe, –
That her play was passande uch a prince
game,

1015 In **vayres**.
Trumpes and **nakerys**,
Much pipyng there repayres;
Uch man tented his,
And thay two tented thayres.

1020 Much dut was there driven that day and that
other,
The joy of Saynt Johnes day was gentyl to
here,
And the thrid also thro throng in thereafter,
–
And was the last of the layk, ledes there
thoghten:
There were gestes to go upon the gray
morne;

1025 Forthy wonderly thay woke and the wyne
dronken,
Daunced ful dryly with dere caroles;
At the last, when hit was late, thay lachen
her leve,
Uchone to wende on his way that was wye
strange.
Gawan gave him good day; the goodman

- him laches,
1030 Charres him to his owne chamber the
chymne biside,
And there he drawes him on drye and derely
him thonkes
Of the wyne worschip that he him wayved
hade
As to honour his house on that highe tyde
And enbelyse his burgh with his bele chere:
1035 'Iwysse, sir, while I lyve me worthes the
better
That Gawan has ben my gest at Goddes owne
fest.'
'Grant mercy,' quoth Gawan, 'in good fayth
hit is youres,
All the honour is your owne – the High-Kyng
yow yelde;
And I am wye at your wille to worke your
heste,
1040 As I am holden thereto, in high and in lowe,
By right.'
The lord fast con him **payne**
To holde lenger the knight;
To him answare Gawayn
1045 By non way that he myght.

Then frayned the freke ful fayre at himselven
What **derve** dede had him driven at that dere
tyme
So kenely fro the kynges court to **kayre** all
his one
Ere the halydayes holly were haled out of

toune.

1050 'For sothe, sir,' quoth the segge, 'ye **sayn** bot
the trauthe:

A high ernde and a hasty me had fro tho
wones.

For I am **sumned myself** to sech to a place
I ne wot in worlde **whederwarde** to wende
hit to fynde;

I nolde bot if I hit negh myght on New Yeres
morne

1055 For all the londe **inwith** Logres, so me our
Lord helpe.

Forthy, sir, this enquest I **require** yow here,
That ye me telle with trauthe if ever ye tale
herde

Of the Grene Chapel, where hit on grounde
standes,

And of the knight that hit kepes of colour of
grene.

1060 There was stabled by statut a steven us
bitwene

To mete that man at that mere, if I myght
laste.

And of that ilk New Yere bot **neked** now
wontes,

And I wolde loke on that lede, if God me let
wolde,

Gladloker, by Godes son, then any good
welde.

1065 Forthy, iwysse, by your wille, wende me
behoves:

Naf I now to busy bot bare thre dayes,
And me as fayn to falle feye as fayle of myn
ernde.'

Then laghande quoth the lord: 'Now leng
thee behoves,

For I schal teche yow to that terme by the
tymes ende, –

1070 The Grene Chapel upon grounde greve yow
no more.

Bot ye schal be in your bed, burn, at thyn
ese,

While forth-dayes and ferk on first of the
yere,

And come to that merk at mydmorn, to make
what yow likes

In spenne.

1075 Dwelles while New Yeres day,
And ris and raykes thenne;
Man schal yow set in way, –
Hit is not two myle henne.'

Then was Gawan ful glad, and gomenly he
laghed:

1080 'Now I thonk yow thryvandely, thurgh all
other thinges!

Now acheved is my chaunce, I schal at your
wille

Dwelle and elles do what ye demen.'

Then sesed him the syre and set him biside,
Let the ladies be fette to like hem the better.

1085 There was seme solace by hemself stille;
The lord let for luf lotes so mery

As wye that wolde of his wyt ne wyst what
he myghte.

Then he carped to the knight, cryande loude:
‘Ye haf demed to do the ded that I bidde:

1090 Wil ye holde this hest here at this ones?’

‘Ye, sir, for sothe,’ sayd the segge true,
‘While I bide in your burgh, be bayn to your
heste.’

‘For ye have travayled,’ quoth the
tulk, ‘toven fro [ferre](#),

And sithen waked me with, ye are not wel
warist,

1095 Nauther of sustnaunce ne of slepe, sothly I
knowe.

Ye schal leng in your [loft](#) and lye in your ese
Tomorne while the Masse-while, and to mete
wende

When ye wil, with my wyf, that with yow
schal sitte

And [comfort](#) yow with compayny til I to
court [turne](#).

1100 Ye [lende](#),

And I schal erly rise:

On [huntyng](#) wil I wende.’

Gawan grantes all these,

Him heldande as the hende.

1105 ‘Yet ferre,’ quoth the freke, ‘a forward we
make:

Whatsoever I wyne in the wode hit worthes
to [yours](#),

And what [chek](#) so ye acheve chaunge me

therefore.

Swete, **swape** we so, sware with trauthe,
Whether lede so lympe here other better.'

1110 'By God,' quoth Gawan the goode, 'I grante
theretille,

And that yow lyst for to **layke** lef hit me
thinkes.'

'Who brynges us this beverage, this bargayn
is maked.'

So sayd the lord of that lede; thay laghed
uchone.

Thay dronken and daylyeden and dalten
untyghtel,

1115 These lordes and ladies, while that hem
liked;

And sithen with frenkysch fare and fele fayre
lotes

Thay stoden and stemed and **stilly** thay
speken,

Kysten ful comlyly and caghten her leve.

With mony lede ful lyght and **lemande**
torches

1120 Uch burn to his bed was broght at the laste,
Ful softe.

To bed yet ere thay yede

Recorded covenantes oft;

The olde lord of that lede

1125 Couth wel holde layk alofte.

FITT III

FUL erly before the day the folk are uprysen.

- Gestes that go wolde her gromes thay **calden**,
And thay busken up bylive blonkes to sadel,
Tyffen her takles, **trussen** her **males**;
- 1130 Richen hem the richest, to ride all **arayed**,
Lepen up lyghtly, lachen her brydeles,
Uch wye on his way there him wel liked.
The leve lord of the londe was not the laste
Arayed for the rydyng, with renkes ful mony;
- 1135 Ete a sop **hastily**, when he had herde Masse;
With bugle to bent-felde he buskes bylive:
By that that any **daylyght** lemed upon erthe,
He and his hatheles on high horses weren.
Then these cacheres that couthe **coupled** her
houndes,
- 1140 Unclosed the kenel dor and calde hem
thereoute,
Blw bigly in bugles bare thre **notes**;
Braches bayed therefore and breme noyse
maked,
And thay chastysed and charred on chasyng
that wenten
A hundred of hunteres, as I have herde telle,
- 1145 Of the best.
To trysteres vewters **yod**,
Couples huntres of kest;
There ros for blastes good
Gret rurd in that forest.
- 1150 At the first quethe of the **quest** quaked the
wylde.
Dere drof in the dale, doted for drede,
Hyed to the high, – bot heterly thay were

Restayed with the stablye, that stoutly
ascryed.

Thay let the herttes have the gate with the
highe hedes,

1155 The breme bukkes also with her brode
paumes:

For the fre lord had defende in fermysoun
tyme

That there schulde no man meve to the male
dere.

The hundes were holden in with ‘Hay, hay!’
and ‘Ware!’

The does driven with gret dyn to the depe
slades.

1160 There myght man see as thay
slypped slentyng of arwes:

At uch wende under wande wapped a flone,
That bigly bote on the broun with ful brode
hedes.

What! Thay brayen and bleden, by bonkes
thay dyen, –

And aye raches in a res radly hem folwes,

1165 Hunteres with high horne hasted hem after,
With such a crakkande cry as clyffes had
brusten.

What wylde so atwaped wyes that schotten
Was all to-raced and -rent at the resayte, –
By thay were tened at the high and taysed to
the waters –

1170 The ledes were so lerned at the low trysteres,
And the grehoundes so gret, that geten hem

bylive,
And hem to-fylched as fast as frekes myght
loke

There right.

The lord for blisse abloy
1175 Ful oft con launce and lyght,
And drof that day with joy
Thus to the derke night.

Thus laykes this lord by lyndewodes eves,
And Gawan the good man in gay bedde
lygges,
1180 Lurkkes while the daylyght lemed on the
wowes,
Under covertor ful cler, cortyned aboute.
And as in slomeryng he slode slelyly he herde
A little dyn at his dor and dernely open;
And he heves up his hed out of the clothes,
1185 A corner of the cortyn he caght up a little,
And waytes warly thiderwarde what hit be
myghte:
Hit was the lady, loveliest on lyve to
beholde,
That drow the dor after her ful dernly and
stille,
And bowed toward the bed; and the burn
schamed,
1190 And layd him doun lystily and let as he
slepte.
And ho stepped stilly and stel to his bedde,
Cast up the cortyn and creped withinne,
And set her ful softly on the bedside,

And lended there selly longe to loken when he
wakened.

1195 The lede lay and lurked a ful long while,
Compast in his **conscience** to what that case
myghte

Mene other **amount** – to mervayl, him
thoghte.

Bot yet he sayd in himself, ‘More semely hit
were

To aspye with my spelle in space what ho
wolde.’

1200 Then he wakened and **wroth** and to-her-ward
turned,

And unlouked his iye-lyddes and let as him
wondered,

And **sayned** him, as by his sawe the **saver** to
worthe

With hande.

With chyn and **cheke** ful swete,

1205 Both white and red in **blande**,

Ful lovely con ho **lete**,

With lyppes smal laghande.

‘Good **moroun**, Sir Gawan,’ sayd that gay
lady;

‘Ye are a **sleper** unslye, that man may **slyde**
hider.

1210 Now are ye tan as tite! Bot true us may
schape,

I schal **bynde** yow in your bed, that be ye ful
trayste.’

All laghande the lady laused tho bourdes.

‘Good moroun, gay,’ quoth Gawan the
blythe;

‘Me schal worthe at your wille, and that me
wel likes:

1215 For I yelde me yederly and **yeye** after grace;
And that is the best, by my dome, for me bos
nede.’

And thus he bourded agayn, with mony a
blythe **laghter**.

‘Bot wolde ye, lady lovely, then leve me
grante,

And deprece your prysoun and pray him to
rise,

1220 I wolde bow of this bed and **buske** me better,

—

I schulde kever the more comfort to carpe
yow tille.’

‘Nay, for sothe, beau sir,’ sayde that swete;

‘Ye schal not rise of your rest, I riche yow
better:

I schal **happe** yow here, that other half also,

1225 And sithen carp with my knight that I caght
have.

For I wene wel, iwysse, Sir Wawan ye are,
That all the world worschipes whereso ye
ride:

Your honour, your hendelayk, is **hendely**
praysed

With lordes, with ladies, with all that lif
bere.

1230 And now ye are here, iwysse, and we bot our

one:

My lord and his ledes are on lenthe faren,
Other burnes in her bed, and my burdes alse,
The dor drawen and dit with a derf **haspe**.
And sithen I have in this house him that all
likes,

1235 I schal ware my while wel, while that hit
lastes,

With tale.

Ye are welcom to my corse,
Your owen **won** to wale;
Me behoves of fyne force

1240 Your servant be, and schale.'

'In good fayth,' quoth Gawan, 'gayn hit me
thinkes,

Thagh I be not now he that ye of speken:
To reche to such reverence as ye **reherse**
here

I am wye unworthy, I wot wel myselfen.

1245 By God, I were glad and yow good thoghte
At sawe or at **servyce** that I sette myghte
To the **plesaunce** of your pris – hit were a
pure joye.'

'In good fayth, Sir Gawan,' quoth the gay
lady,

'The pris and the prowes that pleses all
other,

1250 If I hit **lakked** or set at lyght, hit were little
daynte.

Bot hit are ladies inogh that **lever** were
nowthe

Have thee, hende, in her holde, as I thee
have here,

To **daly** with derely, for your **daynte** wordes
Kever hem comfort and **colen** her cares,

1255 Then much of the **garysoun** or gold gat that
thay haven.

Bot, I love that ilk Lord that the lyft holdes,
I have hit holly in my hand that alle desyres,
Thurgh grace.'

Scho made him so gret chere
1260 That was so fayr of face.
The knight with speches skere
Answered to uch a case.

‘Madame,’ quoth the mery man, ‘Mary yow
yelde,

For I have founden, in good fayth, your
fraunchise noble,

1265 And other ful much of other folk fongen her
dedes;

Bot the [daynte](#) that thay delen for my desert
nis hit:

Hit is the worschip of yourself that noght bot
wel connes.’

‘By Mary,’ quoth the menskful, ‘me think hit
an other:

For were I worth all the won of wymmen
[alyve](#),

1270 And all the wele of the world were in my
hande,

And I schuld [chepen](#) and chose to cheve me
a lorde,

For the costes that I have knowen upon thee,
knight, here,

Of beaute, of debonerte, of blythe
[semblaunce](#),

And that I have ere herkened and holde hit
here true,

1275 There schuld no freke upon folde before yow
be chosen.’

‘Iwysse, worthy,’ quoth the wye, ‘ye have
waled wel better.

Bot I am proud of the pris that ye put on me,

And soberly your servant, my **soverayn** I
holde yow,
And your knight I becom, and Cryst yow
foryelde.'

- 1280 Thus thay meled of muchwhat til mydmorn
was passed,
And aye the lady let as ho liked him and
loved him swythe;
The freke ferde with defence and **feted** ful
fayre.
Thagh hit were burde bryghtest, the burn in
mynde hade
The lesse luf in his lode for lur that he soghte
- 1285 Bout hone:
The dint that schuld him deve,
And nedes hit most be done.
The lady then speke of leve;
He granted her ful sone.

- 1290 Then ho gave him good day, and with a **glent**
laghed,
And as ho stod ho **stouned** him with ful **stor**
wordes:
'Now He that spedes uch a speche this
disport yelde yow, –
Bot that ye be Gawan, ungayn gos hit in
mynde.'
'Wherfore?' quoth the freke – and **freschly** he
askes,
- 1295 Ferde lest he had fayled in forme of his
castes.
Bot the burde him blessed, and 'By this

skylle,' sayde:

'So good as good Gawan gaynly is holden,
And courtaysye is closed so clene in
himselven,

Couth not lyghtly have lenged so long with a
lady,

1300 Bot he had craved a **cosse** by his courtaysye,
By sum touch of sum trifle at sum tales
ende.'

Then quoth Wawan, 'Iwysse, worthe as yow
likes:

I schal **kysse** at your **comaundement**, as a
knight falles,

And prestly, lest he displese yow, so **plede**
hit no more.'

1305 Ho comes nerre with that and caches him in
armes,

Loutes luflyche adoun and the lede kysses.

Thay comly bikennen to Cryst ayther other;

Ho dos her forth at the dor withoute dyn
more,

And he riches him to rise and rapes him
sone,

1310 **Clepes** to his **chamberlayn**, choseth his wede,
Bowes forth when he was boun blythely to
Masse,

And then he meved to his mete, that **menskly**
him keped,

And made mery all day til the mone rysed

With game:

1315 Was never freke fayrer fonge

Bitwene two so dyngne **dame**,
The alder and the yonge;
Much solace set thay same.

And aye the lord of the londe is lent on his
gamnes,

1320 To hunt in holtes and **hethe** at hindes
barayne.

Such a soumme he there slow by that the
sunne helded,

Of does and of other dere, to deme were
wonder.

Then **fersly** thay flokked in, folk at the laste,
And **quikly** of the quelled dere a querre thay
maked.

1325 The best bowed thereto with burnes inoghe,
Gedered the grettest of **gres** that there were
And diden hem derely **undo** as the dede
askes.

Serched hem at the asay summe that there
were:

Two fynGRES thay founde of the foulest of
alle.

1330 Sithen thay slit the **slot**, sesed the erber,
Schaved with a scharp knyfe and the schyre
knitten.

Sithen rytte thay the foure lymmes and rent
of the hyde.

Then brek thay the bale, the boweles out
token

Lystily for lausyng the lere of the knotte.

1335 Thay gripped to the gargulun and graythly

departed

The wesaunt fro the wynde-hole and walt
out the guttes.

Then scher thay out the schulderes with her
scharp knyves,

Haled hem by a little hole to have hole sides;
Sithen brittened thay the brest and brayden
hit in twynne.

1340 And eft at the gargulun begins one thenne,
Ryves hit up radly right to the byghte,
Voydes out the avanters, and verayly
thereafter

All the rymes by the rybbes radly thay
lausen;

So ryde thay of by resoun by the rigge bones
1345 Even doun to the haunche, that henged all
samen,

And heven hit up all hole and hewen hit of
there,

And that thay neme for the noumbles by
name, as I trowe,

By kynde.

By the byght all of the thyes
1350 The lappes thay lause bihinde;
To hewe hit in two thay hyes,
By the bakbon to unbynde.

Both the hed and the halse thay hewen of
thenne,

And sithen sunder thay the sides swyft fro
the chyne,

1355 And the corbeles fee thay cast in a greve.

Then thirled thay ayther thik side thurgh by
the **rybbe**

And henged then ayther by hoghes of the
fourches;

Uch freke fonges his fee, as falles for to have.

Upon a felle of the fayr best **fede** thay **thayr**
houndes

1360 With the lyver and the lyghtes, the lether of
the **paunches**,

And bred bathed in blod blent **thereamonges**.

Baldly thay blw **prys**, bayed thayr raches,
Sithen fonge thay her flesch, folden to home,
Strakande ful stoutly mony stif motes.

1365 By that the daylyght was done, the douth
was all **wonnen**

Into the comly castel, there the knight bides
Ful stille,

With blisse and bryght fire bette.

The lord is comen theretille;

1370 When Gawan with him **mette**

There was bot wele at wille.

Then comaunded the syre in that sale to
samen all the meyny,

Bothe the ladies on lowe to lyght with her
burdes.

Before all the folk on the flet frekes he
biddes

1375 Verayly his **venysoun** to fech him before;

And all godly in game Gawan he called,

Teches him to the tayles of ful tayt bestes,

Schewes him the schyre gres **schorne** upon

rybbes.

‘How payes yow this play? Have I pris
wonnen?’

1380 Have I thryvandely thonk thurgh my craft
served?’

‘Ye, iwysse,’ quoth that other wye, ‘here is
wayth fayrest

That I saw this seven yere in sesoun of
wynter.’

‘And all I gif yow, Gawan,’ quoth the gome
thenne,

‘For by acorde of covenaut ye crave hit as
your owen.’

1385 ‘This is soth,’ quoth the segge, ‘I say yow that
ilke:

That I have worthily wonnen these wones
withinne,

Iwysse, with as good wille hit worthes to
yours.’

He **haspes** his fayre halse his armes withinne
And kysses him as comlyly as he couthe
avise:

1390 ‘Tas yow there my chevisaunce, I **cheved** no
more.

I vouche hit saf **fynly** thagh feler hit were.’

‘Hit is good,’ quoth the goodman, ‘grant
merci therefore.

Hit may be such hit is the better, and ye me
breve wolde

Where ye wan this ilke wele by wyt of
yourselven.’

1395 'That was not forward,' quoth he, 'frayst me
no more;
For ye have **tan** that yow **tydes**, trowe ye,
non other

Ye mowe.'

Thay laghed and made hem blythe
With lotes that were to lowe.

1400 To soper thay yede as swythe
With dayntyes new inowe.

And sithen by the chymne in chamber thay
seten.

Wyes the wale wyne weyed to hem ofte,
And eft in her **bourdyng** thay baythen in the
morne

1405 To fylle the same forwardes that thay before
maden:

What chaunce so acheves, her chevisaunce to
chaunge,

What newes so thay nome, at night when
thay metten.

Thay acorded of the covenantes before the
court alle;

The beverage was broght forth in **bourde** at
that tyme.

1410 Then thay lovely **leghten** leve at the laste;
Uch burn to his bed busked bylive.

By that the **kok** had **crowen** and cakled bot
thryes,

The lord was **lopen** of his bed, the ledes
uchone;

So that the mete and the Masse was metely

delyvered,
1415 The douth dressed to the wode, ere any day
sprenged,
To chace.

High with hunt and hornes
Thurgh playnes thay passe in space,
Uncoupled among tho thornes
1420 Raches that ran on race.

SONE thay calle of a quest in a kerre side;
The hunt rehayted the houndes that hit firste
mynged,
Wylde wordes hem warp with a wrast noyse.
The houndes that hit herde hasted thider
swythe
1425 And fellen as fast to the fuyt, forty at ones.
Then such a glaverande glam of gedered
raches
Ros that the rocheres rungen aboute;
Hunteres hem hardened with horne and with
mouthe.

Then all in a semble sweyed togeder
1430 Bitwene a flosche in that frith and a foo
cragge.
In a knot by a clyff at the kerre side,
Thereas the rogh rocher unrydely was fallen,
Thay ferden to the fyndyng, and frekes hem
after.
Thay umbe-kesten the knarre and the knot
bothe,
1435 Wyes, while thay wysten wel withinne hem
hit were,

The best that there breved was with the
blodhoundes.

Then thay beten on the buskes and bede him
upryse,

And he unsoundely out soght segges
overthwerte.

On the sellokest swyn swenged out there,
1440 Long sithen fro the sounder that soght was
for olde;

For he was borlych and brod, bor
althergrattest,

Ful grym when he gronyed; thenne greved
mony,

For thre at the first thrust he thryght to the
erthe

And sparred forth good sped boutte spyt
more.

1445 These other halowed ‘Hyghe!’ ful high and
‘Hay! Hay!’ cried

Haden hornes to mouth, heterly rechated.

Mony was the mery mouth of men and of
houndes

That buskes after this bor with bost and with
noyse

To quelle.

1450 Ful oft he bides the bay

And maymes the mute in melle.

He hurtes of the houndes, and thay

Ful yomerly yaule and yelle.

Schalke to schote at him schowven to
thenne,

- 1455 Haled to him of her **arewes**, hitten him ofte;
Bot the poyntes payred at the pyth that
pyght in his scheldes,
And the barbes of his **browe** bite non wolde;
Thagh the schavene schaft schyndered in
peces,
The hed **hypped** ayayn, wheresoever hit
hitte.
- 1460 Bot when the dintes him dered of her drye
strokes,
Then **braynwod** for **bate** on burnes he **rases**,
Hurtes hem ful heterly there he forth hyes,
And mony arwed thererat and **allyte** drowen.
Bot the lord on a lyght horse launces him
after,
- 1465 As burn bold upon bent his bugle he blowes;
He rechated and rode thurgh **rones** ful
thikke,
Suande this wylde swyn til the sunne
schafte.
This day with this ilk dede thay driven on
this wyse,
While our luflyche lede lys in his bedde,
- 1470 Gawan graythly at home in geres ful riche
Of hue.
The lady not forgot
To come him to salue;
Ful erly ho was him at
- 1475 His mod for to remue.

Ho comes to the cortyn and at the knight
totes.

Sir Wawan her welcomed **worthy** on firste,
And ho him yeldes ayain ful yerne of her
wordes,
Settes her softly by his side and swythely ho
laghes,

1480 And with a lovely **loke** ho layd him these
wordes:

‘Sir, if ye be Wawan, wonder me thinkes,
Wye that is so wel wrast **always** to goode,
And connes not of compayny the costes
undertake,

And if man kennes yow hem to know, ye cast
hem of your mynde.

1485 Thou has foryeten yederly that **yisterday** I
taghte

By **althertruest token** of talk that I couthe.’

‘What is that?’ quoth the wye, ‘Iwysse I wot
never.

If hit be soth that ye breve, the blame is myn
owne.’

‘Yet I kende yow of **kyssyng**,’ quoth the clere
thenne,

1490 ‘Whereso countenaunce is couthe quikly to
clayme;

That becomes uch a knight that courtaysye
uses.’

‘Do way,’ quoth that derf man, ‘my dere, that
speche,

For that durst I not do, lest I devayed were;
If I were werned, I were wrong, iwysse, if I
profered.’

1495 ‘Ma fay,’ quoth the mery wyf, ‘ye may not be
werned!

Ye are stif inogh to **constrayne** with strenthe
if yow likes,

If any were so **vilanous** that yow devaye
wolde.’

‘Ye, by God,’ quoth Gawan, ‘good is your
speche,

Bot thret is **unthryvande** in thede there I
lende,

1500 And uch gift that is geven not with good
wille.

I am at your comaundement to kysse when
yow likes;

Ye may lach when yow lyst and leve when
yow thinkes

In space.’

The lady loutes adoun

1505 And comly kysses his face.

Much speche thay there expoun

Of druryes greme and grace.

‘I wolde wit at yow, wye,’ that worthy there
sayde,

‘And yow wrathed not therewith, what were
the skylle

1510 That so yong and so yep as ye at this tyme,
So cortays, so **knyghtly**, as ye are known
oute –

And of all chevalry to chose, the chef thing
alosed

Is the lel layk of luf, the lettrure of armes;

- For to telle of this **tevelyng** of these true
knightes,
1515 Hit is the **tytelet** token and tyxt of her werkes
How ledes for her lel luf her lyves haf
auntered,
Endured for her drury delfulle stoundes,
And after venged with her valour and
voyded her care
And broght blisse into bour with bountees
her owne –
1520 And ye are knight comlokest kynd of your
elde,
Your word and your worschip walkes
aywhere,
And I have seten by yourself here sere **twyes**,
Yet herde I never of your hed **helde** no
wordes
That ever longed to luf, lesse ne more.
1525 And ye that are so cortays and quoynt of
your **hetes**,
Oghe to a yong thing **yerne** to schewe
And teche sum tokenes of **trueluf** craftes.
Why! Are ye lewed, that all the los weldes?
Or elles ye demen me to **dille** your dalyaunce
to herken?
1530 For schame!
I com hider **sengel** and sitte
To lerne at yow sum game;
Dos teches me of your wyt
While my lord is fro **hame**.’
1535 ‘In good fayth,’ quoth Gawan, ‘God yow

foryelde!

Gret is the good gle and game to me huge
That so worthy as ye wolde wyne yow
hider

And pine yow with so pore a man as play
with your knyghte

With anyskynnes countenaunce – hit keveres
me ese.

1540 Bot to take the torvayle to myself to trueluf
expoune

And touche the temes of tyxt and tales of
armes

To yow, that (I wot wel) weldes more sleghte
Of that art, by the half, or a hundred of
suche

As I am, or ever schal, in erde there I lyve,

1545 Hit were a foly felefolde, my fre, by my
trauthe.

I wolde your wylnyng work at my myghte,
As I am highly beholden, and evermore wille
Be servaunt to yourselven, so save me
Dryhtyn!’

Thus him frayned that fre and fonded him
ofte

1550 For to have wonnen him to woghe, whatso
scho thoght elles.

Bot he defended him so fayr that no faut
semed,

Ne non evel on nauther halve nauther thay
wysten

Bot blisse.

Thay laghed and layked longe;
1555 At the last scho con him kysse;
Her leve fayr con scho fonge
And went her way, iwysse.

Then **ruthes** him the renk and rises to the
Masse,
And sithen her diner was dight and derely
served.

1560 The lede with the ladies layked all daye;
Bot the lord over the londes launced ful ofte,
Sues his **uncely** swyn, that **swynges** by the
bonkes,
And bote the best of his braches the bakkes
in **sunder**
There he bode in his bay, til **bawemen** hit
breken

1565 And made him maugre his hed for to **meve**
utter,
So fele flones there flete when the folk
gedered.
Bot yet the stifest to start by stoundes he
made,
Til at the last he was so mate he myght no
more renne,
Bot in the haste that he myght he to a hole
wynnes

1570 Of a rasse by a rok there rennes the borne.
He gete the bonk at his bak, begins to
scrape,
The frothe femed at his mouth unfayre by
the **wykes**,

Whettes his white tusches; with him then
irked

All the burnes so bold that him by stoden,
1575 To noye him on-ferum, bot negh him non
durste

For wothe.

He had hurt so mony beforne
That all thocht then ful lothe
Be more with his tusches torne,
1580 That breme was and braynwod bothe. –

Til the knight com himself cachande his
blonke,

Saw him bide at the bay, his burnes biside.
He lyghtes luflyche adoun, leues his corsour,
Braydes out a bryght bronde and bigly forth
strydes,

1585 Foundes fast thurgh the forde there the felle
bides.

The wylde was ware of the wye with weppen
in hande,

Hef highly the hayre, so heterly he fnasted
That fele ferde for the freke lest felle him the
worre.

The swyn settes him out on the segge even,
1590 That the burn and the bor were both upon
hepes

In the wightest of the water – the worre had
that other:

For the man merkkes him wel as thay mette
firste,

Set sadly the scharp in the slot even,

Hit him up to the hult, that the hert
schyndered,

1595 And he **yarrande** him yelde and **yedoun** the
water

Ful tite.

A hundred houndes him hent

That bremly con him **bite**;

Burnes him broght to bent

1600 And dogges to deth **endite**.

There was blowyng of prys in many breme
horne,

High halowyng on high, with hatheles that
myghte;

Braches bayed that best, as bidden the
maysters,

Of that **chargeaunt chace** that were chef
hundes.

1605 Then a wye that was wyse upon **wodcraftes**
To **unlace** this bor lovely begins.

First he hewes of his hed and on high settes
And sithen rendes him all rogh by the rigge
after,

Braydes out the boweles, brennes hem on
glede,

1610 With bred blent therewith his braches
rewards.

Sithen he **brittenes** out the **brawne** in bryght
brode scheldes

And has out the hastlettes, as **highly**
bisemes;

And yet hem **halches** all hole the halves

togeder

And sithen on a stif stange **stoutly** hem
henges.

1615 Now swythe with this ilk swyn thay swengen
to home;

The bores hed was born before the burnes
selven

That him **forferde** in the forde thurgh force
of his hande

So stronge.

Til he saw Sir Gawayn

1620 In halle him thocht ful longe.

He calde and he com gayn

His fees there for to fonge.

The lord ful loude with lote laghede mery
When he saw Sir Gawan, with solace he
spekes.

1625 The good ladies were geten and gedered the
meyny.

He schewes hem the scheldes and schapes
hem the tale

Of the **largesse** and the lenthe, the **lithernes**
alse,

Of the werre of the wylde swyn in wode
there he fledde.

That other knight ful comly **comended** his
dedes,

1630 And praysed hit as gret pris that he proved
hade,

For such a brawne of a best, the bolde burn
sayde,

Ne such sides of a swyn saw he never ere.
Then hondeled thay the huge hed, the hende
man hit praysed

And let lodly **thereat** the lord for to **here**.

1635 'Now, Gawan,' quoth the goodman, 'this
game is your owne

By fyne forward and **fast**, **faythely**, ye
knowe.'

'Hit is soth,' quoth the segge, 'and as siker
true

All my **get** I schal yow gif agayn, by my
trauthe.'

He hent the hathel aboute the halse and
hendly him kysses,

1640 And **eftersones** of the same he served him
there.

'Now are we **even**,' quoth the hathel, 'in this
eventide,

Of all the covauntes that we knit sithen I
com hider

By lawe.'

The lord sayd, 'By Saynt Gile,

1645 Ye are the best that I **knawe**.

Ye ben rich in a while,

Such **chaffer** and ye drawe.'

Then thay telded tables trestes alofte,
Casten clothes upon clere white thenne,

1650 Wakened by woves **waxene** torches,
Segges set and served in sale all aboute.

Much glam and much gle glent up thereinne
Aboute the fire upon flet – and on fele wyse,

At the soper and after: mony athel songes,
1655 As coundutes of Cristmasse and caroles newe,
With all the **manerly** mirthe that man may of
telle,
And ever our luflyche lede the lady biside.
Such semblaunt to that segge semely ho
made,
With stille stollen countenance that
stalworth to plesse,
1660 That all **forwondered** was the wye and wroth
with himselven;
Bot he nolde not for his nurture norne her
ayaynes,
Bot dalt with her all in daynte, howso the
dede turned

To **wrast**.

When thay had played in halle
1665 As long as her wille hem last,
To chamber he con him calle,
And to the chymne thay passed.

And there thay dronken and dalten and
demed eft newe
To norne on the same note on New Yeres
even;
1670 Bot the knight craved leve to kayre on the
morne,
For hit was negh at the terme that he to
schulde.
The lord him letted of that, to leng him
restayed,
And sayd, 'As I am true segge, I siker my

trauthe

Thou schal cheve to the Grene Chapel thy
charres to make,

1675 Lede, on New Yeres lyght longe before
pryme.

Forthy thou lye in thy loft and lache thyn
ese,

And I schal hunt in this **holt** and holde the
touches,

Chaunge with thee chevisaunce, by that I
charre hider.

For I have fraysted thee twys and faythful I
fynde thee:

1680 Now “thrid tyme throwe best” thenk on the
morne.

Make we mery while we may and mynne
upon joye,

For the lur may man lach **whenso** man likes.’

This was graythely granted and Gawan is
lenged;

Blythe broght was hem drink, and thay to
bed yeden

1685 With lyght.

Sir Gawan lys and slepes

Ful stille and soft all night;

The lord that his craftes kepes

Ful erly he was dight.

1690 After Masse a **morsel** he and his men token.
Mery was the morning, his **mounture** he
askes.

All the hatheles that on horse schulde helden

him after

Were boun busked on her blonkes before the
halle yates.

Ferly fayr was the folde, for the forst
clenged;

1695 In red **rudede** upon **rak** rises the sunne
And ful clere costes the cloudes of the
welkyn.

Hunteres unhardeled by a holt side,
Rocheres rungen by rys for rurd of her
hornes.

Summe fel in the fuyt there the fox bode,
1700 Trayles oft a-traverce by **traunt** of her **wyles**.
A kenet cryes thereof, the hunt on him
calles;

His **felawes** fallen him to, that fnasted ful
thikke,

Runnen forth in a rabel in his right fare,
And he fyskes hem before; thay founden him
sone,

1705 And when thay saw him with sight thay sued
him faste,

Wreyande him ful **weterly** with a wroth
noyse.

And he **trantes** and **tournayes** thurgh mony
tene greve,

Havilounes and herkenes by **hegges** ful ofte.
At the last by a little dich he lepes over a
spenne,

1710 Steles out ful stilly by a strothe-**rande**,
Wende have **wylt** of the wode with wyles fro

the houndes.

Then was he went ere he wyst to a wale
[tryster](#),

There thre thro at a [thrych](#) thrat him at ones,
All gray.

1715 He [blenched](#) ayain bylive
And stifly start astray;
With all the wo on lyve
To the wode he went away.

Then was hit lef upon list to lythen the
houndes,

1720 When all the mute had him met, menged
togeder.

Such a sorwe at that sight thay set on his
hede,

As all the [clamberande](#) clyffes had clatered
on hepes.

Here he was halowed when hatheles him
metten,

Yonde he was yayed with yarrande speche;

1725 There he was threted and oft thef called,
And aye the titleres at his tayl that tary he
ne myghte.

Oft he was runnen at when he out rayked,
And oft reled in ayain, so [Reynarde](#) was
[wyly](#).

And, ye, he lad hem by lagmon, the lord and
his meyny,

1730 On this maner by the mountes while
[mydoverunder](#),

While the hende knight at home [holsumly](#)

slepes

Withinne the comly cortynes on the colde
morne.

Bot the lady for luf let not to slepe,
Ne the **purpose** to **payre** that pyght in her
herte,

1735 Bot ros her up radly, rayked her thider,
In a mery mantyle mete to the erthe,
That was furred ful **fyne** with felles wel
pured;

No hues good on her hed bot the **hawer**
stones

Trased aboute her tressour by twenty in
clusteres;

1740 Her thryven face and her throte throwen all
naked,

Her brest bare before and bihinde eke.

Ho comes withinne the chamber dor and
closes hit her after,

Wayves up a wyndow and on the wye calles,
And radly thus **rehayted** him with her riche
wordes,

1745 With chere:

‘A! man, how may thou slepe,

This morning is so clere!’

He was in droupyng depe,

Bot then he con her here.

1750 In drye droupyng of dreame draveled that
noble,

As man that was in mournyng of mony thro
thoghtes,

How that destine schulde that day dele him
his wyrde

At the Grene Chapel, when he the gome
metes

And behoves his buffet abide withoute
debate more.

1755 Bot when that comlyche com he kevered his
wyttes,

Swenges out of the swevenes and swares
with haste.

The lady luflyche com, laghande swete,
Fel over his fayr face and fetly him kyssed.

He welcomes her worthily with a wale chere:

1760 He saw her so glorious and gayly atyred,
So fautles of her fetures and of so fyne hues,
Wyght wallande joy warmed his herte.
With smothe smylyng and smolt thay smeten
into mirthe,

That all was blisse and bonchef that brek
hem bitwene

1765 And wyne.

Thay laused wordes goode,
Much wele then was thereinne;
Gret peril bitwene hem stode
Nif Mary of her knight mynne.

1770 For that prynces of pris depresed him so
thikke,
Nurned him so negh the thred, that nede him
behoved
Other lach there her luf or lodly refuse.
He cared for his courtaysye, lest crathayn he

were,

And more for his meschef if he schulde make
synne

1775 And be **traytor** to that tulk that that telde
aghte.

‘God schylde,’ quoth the schalk, ‘that schal
not befall.’

With **luf-laghyng** a lyte he layd him biside
All the speches of **specialte** that sprang of her
mouthe.

Quoth that burde to the burn: ‘Blame ye
deserve

1780 If ye love not that lif that ye lye **nexste**,
Before all the wytes in the worlde wounded
in herte,
Bot if ye have a lemman, a lever, that yow
likes better,
And folden fayth to that fre, festned so harde
That yow lausen ne lyst – and that I leve
nowthe.

1785 And that ye telle me that now truly I pray
yow,
For all the lufes upon lyve layne not the
sothe

For gile.’

The knight sayd, ‘By Saynt John,’
And **smethely** con he smyle,

1790 ‘In fayth I welde right non
Ne non wil welde the while.’

‘That is a word,’ quoth that wyght, ‘that
worst is of alle;

Bot I am swared for sothe, that **sore** me
thinkes.

Kysse me now comly, and I schal cach
hethen;

1795 I may bot **mourne** upon molde, as may that
much loves.'

Sykande ho sweye doun and semely him
kyssed,

And sithen ho severes him fro and says as ho
standes:

'Now, dere, at this **departing** do me this ese,
Gif me sumwhat of thy gift, thy glove thogh
hit were,

1800 That I may mynne on thee, man, my
mourning to **lassen**.'

'Now iwysse,' quoth that wye, 'I wolde I had
here

The levest thing for thy luf that I in londe
welde,

For ye have deserved, for sothe, sellyly ofte
More rewarde by resoun then I reche
myghte.

1805 Bot to dele yow for drury, that dowed bot
naked:

Hit is not your honour to have at this tyme
A glove for a garysoun of Gawanes giftes;
And I am here on erande in erdes uncouth
And have no men with no males with
menskfulle thinges;

1810 That **mislikes** me, lady, for luf at this tyme.
Uch tulk **mon** do as he is tan, tas to non ille

Ne pine.'

'Nay, hende of high honoures,'

Quoth that lufsum under lyne,

1815 'Thagh I nade oght of youres,
Yet schulde ye have of myne.'

Ho raght him a rich **ryng** of red golde
werkes,

With a starande stone stondande alofte
That bere bluschande bemes as the bryght
sunne;

1820 Wit ye wel hit was worth wele ful huge.
Bot the renk hit renayed and redily he sayde:
'I wil no giftes, for goode, my gay, at this
tyme;

I have non yow to norne ne noght wil I take.'
Ho bede hit him ful **busyly**, and he her **bode**
wernes

1825 And swer swyft by his sothe that he hit **sese**
nolde,

And ho **sory** that he forsoke and sayde
thereafter:

'If ye **renay** my ryng to rich for hit semes,
Ye wolde not so highly holden be to me,
I schal gif yow my **girdel** – that gaynes yow
lesse.'

1830 Ho laght a lace lyghtly that **leke** umbe her
sides,

Knit upon her kyrtel under the clere mantyle;
Gered hit was with grene silk and with golde
schaped,

Noght bot **arounde** brayden, beten with

fynngres;

And that ho bede to the burn and blythely
bisoghte,

1835 Thagh hit unworthy were, that he hit take
wolde.

And he nay that he nolde negh in no wyse
Nauther gold ne garysoun ere God him grace
sende

To acheve to the chaunce that he had chosen
there.

‘And therefore, I pray yow, displese yow
noght

1840 And lettes be your **busynes**, for I baythe hit
never

To **graunt**.

I am derely to yow beholde
Bicause of your semblaunt,
And ever in hot and colde

1845 To be your true servaunt.’

‘Now, forsake ye this silk,’ sayd the burde
thenne,

‘For hit is symple in hitself? And so hit wel
semes.

Lo, so hit is little and lesse hit is worthy.
Bot whoso **knewe** the costes that knit are
thereinne,

1850 He wolde hit prayse at more
pris, paraventure;

For what gome so is gurde with this grene
lace,

While he hit had hemely halched aboute,

There is no hathel under heven **to-hewe** him
that myghte,
For he myght not be slayn for sleight upon
erthe.'

1855 Then caste the knight, and him com to herte
Hit were a juel for the joparde that him
jugged were:

When he acheved to the chapel his **chek** for
to feche,

Myght he have slypped to be **unslayn**, the
sleghte were noble.

Then he **thulged** with her threpe and tholed
her to speke,

1860 And ho bere on him the belt and bede hit
him swythe,

And he granted, and him gave with a good
wille,

And bisoght him for her sake **discover** hit
never,

Bot to lelly **layne** fro her lord; the lede him
acordes

That never wye schulde hit wit, iwysse, bot
thay twayne,

1865 For noght.

He thonkked her oft ful swythe,

Ful **thro** with hert and thoght;

By that on thrynne sythe

Ho has kyst the knight so **toght**.

1870 Then laches ho her leve and leves him there,
For more mirthe of that man myght ho not
gete.

When ho was gon, Sir Gawan **geres** him
 sone,
 Rises and riches him in aray noble,
 Lays up the **luf-lace** the lady him raghte,
 1875 Hid hit ful holdely there he hit eft **fonde**.
 Sithen **chefly** to the chapel choses he the
 waye,
Previly aproched to a prest and prayed him
 there
 That he wolde lysten his lif and leren him
 better
 How his saule schulde be saved when he
 schulde **seye** hethen.
 1880 There he **schrof** him **schyrly** and schewed his
 mysdedes,
 Of the more and the **mynne**, and mercy
 beseches,
 And of absolucioun he on the segge calles;
 And he asoyled him surely and set him so
 clene
 As **domesday** schulde have ben dight on the
 morne.
 1885 And sithen he mas him as mery among the
 fre ladies,
 With comlyche caroles and all kynnes joye,
 As never he did bot that day, to the derk
 nighte
 With blisse.
 Uch man had daynte thare
 1890 Of him, and sayd, 'Iwysse,
 Thus mery he was never **are**,

Syn he com hider, ere this.'

NOW let him leng in that lee, there luf him
bityde.

Yet is the lord on the launde ledande his
gamnes.

1895 He has forfaren this fox that he folwed longe.

As he sprent over a spenne to **spye** the
schrewe,

Thereas he herde the houndes that hasted
him swythe,

Reynarde com richchande thurgh a rogh
greve,

And all the **rael** in a res right at his heles.

1900 The wye was ware of the wylde and warly
abides,

And braydes out the bryght bronde and at
the best castes;

And he schunt for the scharp and schulde
have arered;

A **rach rapes** him to right ere he myghte,

And right before the horse fete thay fel on
him alle

1905 And **woried** me this wylly with a wroth
noyse.

The lord lyghtes bylive and laches him sone,
Rased him ful radly out of the rach mouthes,

Holdes high over his hed, **halowes** faste,

And there bayen him bremly mony brothe
houndes.

1910 Huntres hyed hem thider with hornes ful
mony,

Aye [rechatande](#) aryght til thay the renk
sawen.

By that was comen his compayny noble,
All that ever bere bugle blowed at ones
And all these other halowed that hade no
hornes;

1915 Hit was the meriest mute that ever man
herde,

The rich rurd that there was raysed for
Reynarde saule

With lote.

Her houndes thay there rewarde,

Her hedes thay fawne and frote,

1920 And sithen thay tan Reynarde

And [tyrven](#) of his cote.

And then thay helden to home, for hit was
negh nighte,

Strakande ful stoutly in her store hornes.

The lord is lyght at the last at his lef home,

1925 Fyndes fire upon flet, the freke therebyside,
Sir Gawan the goode, that glad was withalle;
Among the ladies for luf he ladde much joye.
He wer a bleaunt of blue that [bradde](#) to the
erthe;

His surkot semed him wel that softe was
furred,

1930 And his hode of that ilke hinged on his
schulder;

Blende all of blaunner were both all aboute.

He metes me this goodman in-myddes the
flore,

And all with game he him gret and godly he
sayde:

‘I schal fylle upon first oure forwardes
nowthe

1935 That we spedly have spoken there spared
was no drinke.’

Then **acoles** he the knight and kysses him
thryes

As saverly and sadly as he hem sette couthe.

‘By Cryst,’ quoth that other knight, ‘ye cache
much **sele**

In **chevisaunce** of this chaffer, if ye had good
chepes.’

1940 ‘Ye, of the **chepe** no **charge**,’ quoth chefly
that other,

‘As is pertly payed the **porchas** that I aghte.’

‘Mary,’ quoth that other man, ‘myn is
bihinde,

For I have hunted all this day and noght
have I geten

Bot this foule fox felle – the fende have the
godes! –

1945 And that is ful pore for to pay for such **pris**
things

As ye have thryght me here thro, suche thre
cosses

So goode.’

‘Inogh,’ quoth Sir Gawayn,

‘I thonk yow, by the rode’;

1950 And how the fox was slayn
He tolde him as thay stode.

With mirthe and mynstralsye, with metes at
her wille,
Thay maden as mery as any men myghten –
With laghyng of ladies, with lotes of
bourdes,

1955 Gawan and the goodman so glad were thay
bothe –

Bot if the douth had doted or dronken ben
other.

Both the man and the meyny maden many
japes,

Til the sesoun was seyen that thay sever
moste;

Burnes to her bed behoved at the laste.

1960 Then lowly his leve at the lord firste
Foches this fre man, and fayr he him
thonkes:

‘Of such a sellyly sojorne as I have hade
here,

Your honour at this high fest, the High-Kyng
yow yelde.

I yef yow me for one of youres, if yourselven
likes,

1965 For I mot nedes, as ye wot, meve tomorne,
And ye me take sum tulk to teche, as ye
hyghte,

The gate to the Grene Chapel, as God wil me
suffer

To dele on New Yeres day the dome of my
wyrdes.’

‘In good fayth,’ quoth the goodman, ‘with a

good wille,

1970 All that ever I yow hyght holde schal I redy.
There **asyngnes** he a servaunt to set him in
the waye
And **coundue** him by the downes, that he no
drechch hade,
For to ferk thurgh the frith and fare at the
gaynest

By greve.

1975 The lord Gawayn con thonk,
Such worschip he wolde him weve.
Then at tho ladies wlonk
The knight has tan his leve.

With care and with kyssyng he carpes hem
tille

1980 And fele thryvande thonkkes he thrat hem to
have,
And thay yelden him ayain yeply that ilke.
Thay bikende him to Cryst with ful colde
sykynges.

Sithen fro the meyny he menskly **departes**:
Uch man that he met, he made hem a thonke

1985 For his **servyce** and his solace and his sere
pine
That thay with busynes had ben aboute him
to serve;
And uch segge as sory to sever with him
there
As thay had woned worthily with that wlonk
ever.
Then with ledes and lyght he lad was to his

chamber

1990 And blythely broght to his bedde to be at his
reste.

If he ne slepe **soundly** saye ne dar I,
For he had much on the morn to mynne, if
he wolde,

In thocht.

Let him lye there stille,

1995 He has ner that he soght.

And ye wil a while be stille

I schal telle yow how thay wrought.

FITT IV

NOW neghes the New Yere and the night
passes,

The day drives to the derk, as the Dryhtyn
biddes.

2000 Bot wylde wederes of the worlde wakened
thereoute,

Cloudes kesten **kenely** the colde to the erthe,
With nye inogh of the northe the naked to
tene;

The snaw snitered ful snart, that snayped the
wylde;

The **werbelande** wynd wapped fro the highe

2005 And drof uch dale ful of **dryftes** ful grete.

The lede lystened ful wel, that lay in his
bedde;

Thagh he loukes his **liddes**, ful little he
slepes;

By uch kok that **crue** he knew wel the

steven.

Deliverly he dressed up ere the day
sprenged,

2010 For there was lyght of a **lamp** that lemed in
his chamber.

He called to his chamberlayn, that cofly him
swared,

And bede him bryng him his bruny and his
blonk sadel.

That other ferkes him up and feches him his
wedes

And **graythes** me Sir Gawan upon a gret
wyse.

2015 First he clad him in his clothes the colde for
to **were**,

And sithen his other harnays, that holdely
was keped,

Both his paunce and his plates piked ful
clene,

The rynges rokked of the roust of his riche
bruny;

And all was fresch as upon first, and he was
fayn thenne

2020 To thonk.

He had upon uch **pece**,

Wypped ful wel and wlonk;

The gayest into Grece,

The burn bede bryng his blonk.

2025 While the wlonkeste wedes he warp on
himselven –

His cote with the **conysaunce** of the clere

werkes

Enurned upon velvet, vertuous stones
Aboute beten and bounden, enbrawdede
semes,

And fayr furred withinne with fayre pelures

—

2030 Yet laft he not the lace, the ladies gifte:
That forgat not Gawan for good of
himselven.

By he had belted the bronde upon his balwe
haunches,

Then dressed he his drury double him
aboute,

Swythe swethled umbe his swange swetely
that wye.

2035 The girdel of the grene silk that gay wel
bisemed,

Upon that ryal red clothe that rich was to
schewe.

Bot wered not this ilk wye for wele this
girdel,

For pryde of the pendauntes, thagh polysed
they were

And thagh the glyterande gold glent upon
endes,

2040 Bot for to saven himself when suffer him
behoved,

To bide bale withoute debate of bronde him
to were

Or knyve.

By that the bold man boun

Wynnes thereoute bylive,
2045 All the meyny of renoun
He thonkes oft ful ryve.

Then was Gryngolet grayth, that gret was
and huge,
And had ben sojourned saverly and in a siker
wyse;
Him lyst prike for poynt that proude horse
thenne.

2050 The wye wynnes him to and wytes on his
lere,
And sayd soberly himself and by his soth
sweres:
'Here is a meyny in this mote that on mensk
thenkes.
The man hem maynteines, joy mot he have!
The lef lady on lyve, luf her bityde!

2055 If thay for charyte cherysen a gest
And holden honour in her hande, the Hathel
hem yelde
That holdes the heven upon high, and also
yow alle!
And if I myght lif upon londe lede any while,
I schulde reche yow sum rewarde redily if I
myghte.'

2060 Then steppes he into stirop and strydes
aloft;
His schalk schewed him his schelde, on
schulder he hit laghte,
Gyrdes to Gryngolet with his gilt heles,
And he startes on the stone, stode he no

lenger

To **praunce**.

2065 His hathel on horse was thenne,
That bere his spere and launce.
'This castel to Cryst I **kenne**:
He gyve hit aye good chaunce.'

The brygge was brayde doun and the brode
yates

2070 Unbarred and born open upon bothe halve.
The burn blessed him bylive and the bredes
passed,
Prayses the porter, before the prince kneled,
Gave him God and good day, that Gawan He
save,

And went on his way with his wye one,
2075 That schulde teche him to turne to that tene
place

There the **rufulle** race he **resayve** schulde.
Thay bowen by bonkes there boghes are
bare,
Thay **clomben** by clyffes there clenges the
colde.

The heven was uphalt, bot ugly thereunder.

2080 Mist **muged** on the mor, malt on the
mountes,

Uch hille had a **hatte**, a mist-hakel huge.
Brokes boyled and brek by bonkes aboute,
Schyre schaterande on schores there thay
doun schowved.

Welawylle was the way there thay by wode
schulden,

2085 Til hit was sone sesoun that the sunne rises
That tyde.

Thay were on a hille ful high,
The white snaw lay biside.
The burn that rode him by

2090 Bede his mayster abide:

‘For I have wonnen yow hider, wye, at this
tyme,

And now nar ye not fer fro that **note** place
That ye haf spied and spured so **specially**
after.

Bot I schal say yow for sothe – sithen I yow
knowe

2095 And ye are a lede upon lyve that I wel lovy –
Wolde ye work by my wyt, ye worthed the
better.

The place that ye pres to ful **perelous** is
holden.

There wones a wye in that **waste** the worst
upon erthe:

For he is stif and sturne and to strike loves,

2100 And more he is then any man upon
myddelerde,

And his body bigger then the best foure
That are in Arthures house, Hestor or other.
He cheves that chaunce at the Chapel Grene
There passes non by that place so proud in
his armes

2105 That he ne **dynges** him to dethe with dint of
his hande;

For he is a man methles and mercy non uses.

For be hit **chorle** other **chaplayn** that by the
chapel rides,
Monk other **masseprest** or any man elles,
Him think as queme him to quelle as quik go
himselven.

2110 Forthy I say yow as soth as ye in sadel sitte,
Com ye there, ye be kyllid, may the knight
rede,
Trowe ye me that truly, thagh ye had twenty
lyves

To **spende**.

He has woned here ful yore,
2115 On bent much baret bende;
Ayain his dintes sore
Ye may not yow **defende**.

‘Forthy, goode Sir Gawan, let the gome one
And gos away sum other gate, upon Godes
halve,

2120 Kayres by sum other kyth, there Cryst mot
yow spede.
And I schal hye me home ayain, and hete
yow ferre
That I schal swere by God and all his goode
halwes,
“As help me God and the **halydam**,” and
othes inoghe,
That I schal lelly yow layne and lause never
tale

2125 That ever ye fonded to fle for freke that I
wyste.’

‘Grant merci,’ quoth Gawan, and gruchyng

he sayde,

‘Wel worthe thee, wye, that woldes my
goode,

And that lelly me layne I leve wel thou
woldes.

Bot helde thou hit never so holde, and I here
passed,

2130 Fonded for ferde for to fle, in forme that thou
telles,

I were a knight cowaude, I myght not be
excused.

Bot I wil chose to the chapel, for chaunce
that may falle,

And talk with that ilk tulk the tale that me
lyste,

Worth hit wele other wo, as the wyrde likes

2135 Hit have.

Thagh he be a sturne knape

To stichtel, and stad with stave,

Ful wel con Dryhtyn schape

His servauntes for to save.’

2140 ‘Mary!’ quoth that other man, ‘now thou so
much spellis

That thou wylt thyn owen nye nyme to
thyselven,

And thee lyst lese thy lif, thee lette I ne kepe.

Haf here thy helme on thy hed, thy spere in
thy hande,

And ride me doun this ilk rake by yon rok
side

2145 Til thou be broght to the bothom of the brem

valaye.

Then loke a little on the launde on thy lyfte
hande,

And thou schal see in that slade the selve
chapelle

And the borlyche burn on bent that hit
kepes.

Now fares wel on Godes halve, Gawan the
noble;

2150 For all the gold upon grounde I nolde go
with thee,

Ne bere thee felawschip thurgh this frith not
on fote ferre.'

By that the wye in the wode wendes his
brydel,

Hit the horse with the heles as hard as he
myghte,

Lepes him over the launde and leves the
knight there

2155 All one.

'By Godes self,' quoth Gawayn,

'I wil nauther grete ne grone.

To Godes wille I am ful bayn,

And to Him I have me tone.'

2160 Then gyrdes he to Gryngolet and gederes the
rake,

Schowves in by a schore at a schawe side,

Rides thurgh the rogh bonk right to the dale.

And then he wayted him aboute, and wylde
hit him thoghte,

And saw no syngne of resette bisides

nowhere,

2165 Bot high bonkes and **brent** upon bothe halve
And rogh knoklede knarres with knornede
stones;

The skues of the scowtes skayned him
thoghte.

Then he hoved and withhelde his horse at
that tyde,

And oft chaunged his chere the chapel to
seche.

2170 He saw non such in no side, and selly him
thoghte,

Save a little on a launde a lawe as it were,
A balwe **berwe** by a bonk the brymme biside,
By a **forw** of a flod that ferkede there;
The borne blubred thereinne as hit boyled
hade.

2175 The knight caches his **caple** and com to the
lawe,

Lyghtes doun luflyly and at a lynde **taches**
The **rayne** and hit riched with a rogh
braunche.

Then he bowes to the berwe, aboute hit he
walkes,

Debatande with himself what hit be myghte.

2180 Hit had a hole on the ende and on ayther
side,

And **overgrowen** with gresse in glodes
aywhere,

And all was **holwe** inwith – nobot an olde
cave,

Or a **crevisse** of an olde cragge, he couthe hit
not deme

With spelle.

2185 ‘**We!** Lord,’ quoth the gentyl knight,
‘Whether this be the Grene Chapelle?
Here myght aboute mydnight
The **Dele** his matynes telle.

‘Now iwysse,’ quoth Wawan, ‘wysty is here.
2190 This oritore is ugly, with erbes overgrowen;
Wel bisemes the wye wruxled in grene
Dele here his **devocioun** on the Deles wyse.
Now I **fele** hit is the fende, in my fyve
wyttes,
That has stoken me this steven to strye me
here.

2195 This is a chapel of **meschaunce**, that chek hit
bityde!
Hit is the corsedest kyrk that ever I com
inne.’

With high helme on his hed, his launce in his
hande,

He **romes** up to the **roffe** of tho rogh wones.
Then herd he of that highe hille, in a hard
roche,

2200 Biyonde the brok in a bonk, a wonder breme
noyse.

What! hit clatered in the clyff as hit **cleve**
schulde,

As one upon a gryndelston had grounden a
sythe;

What! hit wharred and whette as water at a

mulne;

What! hit rusched and ronge, routhe to here.

2205 Then 'By God,' quoth Gawan, 'that gere, as I
trowe,

Is riched at my reverence me reken to mete

By rote.

Let God worke, we lo!

Hit helpes me not a mote.

2210 My lif thagh I forgo,
Drede dos me no lote.'

Then the knight con calle ful highe:

'Who stightles in this stedde me steven to
holde?

For now is good Gawan goande right here.

2215 If any wye oght wil, wyne hider faste,
Other now other never, his nedes to spede.'
'Abide,' quoth one on the bonk aboven ouer
his hede,

'And thou schal have all in haste that I thee
hyght ones.'

Yet he rusched on that rurd rapely a throwe

2220 And with whettyng awharf ere he wolde
lyghte;

And sithen he keveres by a cragge and comes
of a hole,

Whyrlande out of a wro with a felle weppen,
A Denes axe newe dight the dint with to
yelde,

2225 With a borlyche bitte bent by the halme,
Fyled in a fylor, foure fote large:

Hit was no lesse by that lace that lemed ful

bryghte;

And the gome in the grene gered as firste,
Both the lere and the legges, lokkes and
berde,

Save that fayr on his fote he foundes on the
erthe:

2230 Set the stele to the stone and stalked biside;
When he wan to the water, there he wade
nolde,

He hypped over on his axe and **orpedly**
strydes,

Bremly brothe on a bent that brod was
aboute

On snowe.

2235 Sir Gawan the knight con mete,
He ne lutte him **nothing** lowe.
That other sayd, 'Now, sir swete,
Of steven man may thee trowe.

'Gawan,' quoth that grene gome, 'God thee
mot loke!

2240 Iwysse thou are welcom, wye, to my place,
And thou has **tymed** thy travayl as true man
schulde.

And thou knowes the covenantes cast us
bitwene:

At this tyme twelmonyth thou toke that thee
falled,

And I schulde at this New Yere yeply thee
quyte.

2245 And we are in this valay verayly our one;
Here are no renkes us to ryd, **rele** as us likes.

Haf thy helme of thy hed and haf here thy
paye.

Busk no more debate then I thee bede thenne
When thou **wypped** of my hed at a wap one.'

2250 'Nay, by God,' quoth Gawan, 'that me gost
lante,

I schal **gruch** thee no **grue** for greme that
falles.

Bot stichtel thee upon on stroke, and I schal
stande stille

And warp thee no **wernyng** to work as thee
likes

Nowhare.'

2255 He lened with the nek and lutte
And schewed that schyre all bare
And let as he noght dutte;
For drede he wolde not dare.

THEN the gome in the grene graythed him
swythe,

2260 Gederes up his grymme tole Gawan to smyte;
With all the bur in his body he bere hit on
lofte,

Mynt as maghtyly as **marre** him he wolde.
Had hit driven adoun as drye as he attled,
There had ben ded of his dint that doghty
was ever;

2265 Bot Gawan on that giserne glyfte him biside,
As hit com glydande adoun on **glode** him to
schende,

And schrank a little with the schulderes for
the scharp yrne.

That other schalk with a **schunt** the schene
withholdes,

And then **repreved** he the prince with mony
proude wordes:

2270 ‘Thou art not Gawan,’ quoth that gome, ‘that
is so good holden,

That never arwed for no here by hille ne by
vale,

And now thou fles for ferde ere thou fele
harmes!

Such **cowardise** of that knight couthe I never
here.

Nauther **fyked** I ne **flagh**, freke, when thou
myntest,

2275 Ne cast no **cavelacioun** in kynges house
Arthur.

My hed flagh to my fote and yet flagh I
never,

And thou, ere any harme hent, **arwes** in
herte;

Wherefore the better burn me burde be
called

Therefore.’

2280 Quoth Gawan, ‘I schunt ones,
And so wil I no more.

Bot thagh my hed falle on the stones
I con not hit restore.

‘Bot busk, burn, by thy fayth, and bryng me
to the poynte,

2285 Dele to me my destiny and do hit out of
hande;

For I schal stande thee a stroke and starte no
more

Til thyn axe have me hit, haf here my
trauthe.'

'Haf at thee then!' quoth that other, and
heves hit alofte,

And waytes as wrothly as he wod were.

2290 He myntes at him maghtyly, bot not the man
rynes:

Withhelde heterly his hand ere hit **hurt**
myghte.

Gawan graythly hit bides and glent with no
membre,

Bot stod stille as the stone, or a stubbe other
That ratheled is in **roche** grounde with rotes
a hundred.

2295 Then meryly eft con he mele, the man in the
grene:

'So, now thou has thy hert hole, **hitte** me
behoves.

Holde thee now the highe hode that Arthur
thee raghte,

And kepe thy kanel at this cast, if hit kever
maye.'

Gawan ful **gryndelly** with greme then sayde:

2300 '**Wy**! thresch on, thou thro man, thou thretes
to longe.

I hope that thy hert arwe with thyn owen
selven.'

'For sothe,' quoth that other freke, 'so felly
thou spekes,

I wil no lenger on lyte lette thyn ernde
Right now.'

2305 Then **tas** he him strythe to strike
And frounses both **lyppe** and browe.
No mervayl thagh him mislike
That hoped of no **rescowe**.

He lyftes lyghtly his **lome** and let hit down
fayre

2310 With the **barbe** of the bitte by the bare
nekke;
Thagh he **homered** heterly, hurt him no
more

Bot snyrt him on that on side, that severed
the hyde.

The scharp schrank to the flesch thurgh the
schyre grece,

That the schene blod over his
schulderes schot to the erthe.

2315 And when the burn saw the blod blenk on
the snawe,

He **sprit** forth **spenne-fote** more then a spere
lenthe,

Hent heterly his helme and on his hed caste,
Schot with his schulderes his fayre schelde
under,

Braydes out a bryght sworde, and bremly he
spekes –

2320 Never syn that he was burn born of his
moder

Was he never in this worlde wye half so
blythe:

‘Blynne, burn, of thy bur, bede me no mo!
I have a stroke in this sted withoute strif
hente,
And if thou reches me any mo, I redily schal
quyte
And yelde yederly ayayn, and thereto ye
tryste –

And foo.

Bot on stroke here me falles:
The covenaut **schop** right so
Festned in Arthures halles;

2330 And therefore, hende, now hoo!’

The hathel helded him fro and on his axe
rested,
Set the schaft upon schore and to the scharp
lened
And loked to the lede that on the launde
yede,

How that doghty **dredles** derfly there standes
2335 Armed, ful **awles**: in hert hit him likes.

Then he meles meryly with a much steven,
And with a ryngande rurd he to the renk
sayde:

‘Bolde burn, on this bent be not so gryndel.
No man here **unmanerly** thee **mysboden**
habbes,

2340 Ne kyd bot as covenaut at kynges court
schaped.

I hyght thee a stroke and thou hit has; holde
thee wel payed.

I **relece** thee of the remnaunt of rightes all

other:

If I deliver had ben, a buffet paraunter
I couthe wrothloker have waret, to thee have
wroght anger.

2345 First I **mansed** thee meryly with a mynt one
And **rove** thee with no **rof-sore**; with right I
thee profered,

For the forward that we **fest** in the first
nighte,

And thou **trystely** the trauthe and truly me
holdes:

All the **gayne** thou me **gafe** as good man
schulde.

2350 That other mynt for the morn, man, I thee
profered

Thou kyssedes my clere wyf, the cosses me
raghtes.

For bothe two here I thee bede bot two bare
myntes

Bout scathe.

True mon true restore,

2355 Then **thar** man drede no **wathe**.

At the thrid thou fayled thore

And therefore that tappe **ta** thee.

‘For hit is my wede that thou weres, that ilk
woven girdel:

Myn owen wyf hit thee weved, I wot wel for
sothe.

2360 Now know I wel thy cosses and thy costes
alse,

And the **wowyng** of my wyf – I wroght hit

myselfen.

I sende her to asay thee, and sothly me
thinkes

On the fautleste freke that ever on fote yede.

As perle by the white pese is of pris more,

2365 So is Gawan, in good fayth, by other gay
knightes.

Bot here yow lakked a little, sir, and leaute
yow wonted;

Bot that was for no wylyde werk, ne for
wowyng nauther,

Bot for ye loved your lif – the lasse I yow
blame.’

That other stif man in study stod a gret
while,

2370 So agreved for greme he gryed withinne.

All the blod of his brest blende in his face,

That all he schrank for schame that the
schalk talked.

The forme word upon folde that the freke
meled:

‘Corsed worthe cowardise and covetyse
bothe!

2375 In yow is vilany and vice that vertue
disstryes’.

Then he caght to the knot and the cast
lauses,

Brayde brothely the belt to the burne selven:

‘Lo there the falssyng, foule mot hit falle!

For care of thy knokke, cowardise me taghte

2380 To acorde me with covetyse, my kynde to

forsake,

That is largesse and leaute that **longes** to
knightes.

Now am I fauty and false, and ferde have
ben ever

Of trecherye and **untrauthe** – both bityde
sorwe

And care!

2385 I **beknowe** yow, knight, here stille,
All fauty is my fare.
Lettes me **overtake** your wille
And eft I schal be ware.'

Then **loghe** that other lede and **luflyly** sayde:
2390 'I holde hit hardily hole the harme that I
hade:

Thou art confessed so clene, beknownen of
thy mysses,

And has the penaunce apert of **poynt** of myn
egge,

I holde thee polysed of that plyght and pured
as clene

As thou hades never forfeited syn thou was
first borne.

2395 And I gif thee, sir, the girdel that is gold-
hemmed;

For hit is grene as my gown, Sir Gawan, ye
maye

Thenk upon this ilke **threpe** there thou forth
thrynges

Among princes of pris, and this a pure token
Of the chaunce of the Grene Chapel at

chevalrous knightes.

2400 And ye schal in this New Yere ayain to my
wones,

And we schyn **revel** the remnaunt of this
riche feste

Ful bene.'

There lathed him fast the lord

And sayd, 'With my wyf, I wene,

2405 We schal yow wel **acorde**,

That was your **enmy** kene.'

'Nay, for sothe,' quoth the segge, and sesed
his helme

And has hit of hendly and the hathel
thonkes:

'I have sojourned sadly – sele yow bityde,

2410 And He yelde hit yow yare that yarkes all
menskes!

And comaundes me to that cortays, your
comlyche fere,

Both that one and that other, myn honoured
ladies,

That thus her knight with her cast have
coyntly **bigyled**.

Bot hit is no ferly thagh a fol madde,

2415 And thurgh wyles of wymmen be wonnen to
sorwe.

For so was Adam in erde with one bigyled,

And Salomon with fele sere; and Samson
eftsones –

Dalyda dalt him his wyrde – and David
thereafter

Was **blended** with Barsabe, that much bale
tholed,

2420 Now these were wrathed with her wyles, hit
were a wyne huge

To love hem wel and leve hem not, a lede
that couthe.

For these were **forne** the freest, that folwed
all the sele

Excellently of all these other under
hevenryche

That **mused**;

2425 And all thay were **biwyled**
With wymmen that thay used.
Thagh I be now bigyled,
Me think me burde be excused.

‘Bot your girdel,’ quoth Gawan, ‘God yow
foryelde!

2430 That wil I welde with good wille, not for the
wyne golde,

Ne the saynt, ne the silk, ne the syde
pendauntes,

For wele ne for worschip, ne for the wlonk
werkes,

Bot in syngne of my surfet I schal see hit
ofte:

When I ride in renoun **remorde** to myselven

2435 The faut and the fayntyse of the flesch
crabbed,

How tender hit is to **entyse** teches of fylthe;

And thus, when pryde schal me **prik** for
prowes of armes,

The loke to this luf-lace schal lethe my herte.
Bot one I wolde yow pray, displeses yow
never:

2440 Syn ye be lord of the yonder londe that I
have lent inne
With yow with worschip – the Wye hit yow
yelde
That **upholdes** the heven and on high sittes –
How norne ye your right name, and then no
more?’

‘That schal I telle thee truly,’ quoth that
other thenne:

2445 ‘Bertilak de Hautdesert I **hat** in this londe,
Thurgh myght of Morgue la Faye that in my
house lenges
And quoyntyse of clergye, by craftes wel
lernerd,
The maystres of Merlin, mony has taken;
For ho has dalt drury ful dere sumtyme
2450 With that **conable clerk**: that knowes all your
knightes

At hame.

Morgue the Goddes
Therefore hit is her name.

Weldes non so high hawtesse

2455 That ho ne con make ful tame.

‘Ho wayned me upon this wyse to your
wynne halle
For to assay the sorquydrye, if hit soth were,
That rennes of the grete renoun of the
Rounde Table.

Ho wayved me this wonder your wyttes to
reve,

2460 For to have greved Guenore and gart her to
die

With glopnyng of that ilk gome that
gostlyche speked

With his hed in his hande before the highe
table.

That is ho that is at home, the auncian lady;
Ho is even thyn aunt, Arthures half-sister,

2465 The duches doghter of Tyntagelle, that dere
Uter after

Had Arthur upon, that athel is nowthe.

Therefore I ethe thee, hathel, to come to
thyn aunte;

Make mery in my house: my meyny thee
loves,

And I wil thee as wel, wye, by my faythe,

2470 As any gome under God, for thy grete
trauthe!'

And he nikked him nay, he nolde by no
wayes.

Thay acolen and kyssen, and kennen ayther
other

To the Prince of Paradise, and parten right
there

On colde.

2475 Gawayn on blonk ful bene

To the kynges burgh buskes bolde,
And the knight in the enker grene
Whiderwarde-so-ever he wolde.

Wylde wayes in the worlde Wawan now
rides

2480 On Gryngolet, that the grace had gotten of his
live.

Oft he herbered in house and oft all
thereoute,

And mony aventure in vale he venquished
ofte

That I ne tyght at this tyme in tale to
remene.

The hurt was hole that he had hent in his
nekke,

2485 And the blykkande belt he bere thereabout
[Abelef](#) as a bauderyk bounden by his side,
Loken under his lyft arme, the lace, with a
knotte,

In [tokenyng](#) he was tan in tech of a faute.

And thus he comes to the court, knight all in
[sunde](#).

2490 There wakened wele in that wone when
wyste the grete

That good Gawan was comen: gayn hit hem
thoghte.

The kyng kysses the knight, and the quene
alse,

And sithen mony siker knight that soght him
to [haylse](#),

Of his fare that him frayned – and ferlyly he
telles,

2495 Beknowes all the costes of care that he hade,
The chaunce of the chapel, the chere of the

knighte,
The luf of the lady, the lace at the laste.
The nirt in the nek he naked hem schewed
That he laght for his **unleute** at the ledes
handes

2500 For blame.
He tened when he schuld telle,
He groned for gref and **grame**;
The blod in his face con **melle**
When he hit schulde schewe for schame.

2505 'Lo, lord,' quoth the lede, and the lace
hondeled:
'This is the **bende** of this blame I bere in my
nekke;
This is the lothe and the losse that I laght
have
Of cowardise and covetyse that I have caght
thare;
This is the token of untrauthe that I am tan
inne.

2510 And I mot nedes hit **were** while I may laste.
For man may hyden his harme, bot **unhap** ne
may hit,
For there hit ones is tached twynne wil hit
never.'

The kyng comfortes the knight and all the
court also,
Laghen loude thereat and luflyly acorden
2515 That lordes and ladies that longed to the
Table,
Uch burn of the **brotherhede**, a bauderyk

schuld have,

A bende abelef him aboute of a bryght grene,
And that for sake of that segge in sute to
were.

For that was acorded the renoun of the
Rounde Table,

2520 And he honoured that hit had evermore
after,

As hit is breved in the best boke of
[romaunce](#).

Thus in Arthures day this aunter bitidde:
The Brutus bokes thereof beres wittnesse.
Sithen Brutus the bolde burn bowed hider
firste,

2525 After the sege and the assaut was sesed at
Troye,

Iwysse,

Mony aunteres [here-biforne](#)

Haf fallen such ere this.

Now that bere the crowne of [thorne](#),

2530 He bryng us to His blisse. Amen.

HONY SOYT QUI MAL PENCE

Notes

NOTES TO PEARL

- 1 **Perle:** no title is given in the MS to any of its four poems. In this period, texts were often referred to by their opening words or *incipits*. *Pearl*, *Cleanness* and *Patience* thus in effect provide the medieval equivalent of a title by announcing their subject in their respective first words. Since lines 4 and 8 make it clear that **Perle** here refers to a specific rather than to a class, its lack of preceding determiner causes it to function rather as a proper than as a common noun. The child's name may well have been Margaret or Margery (a name derived ultimately from the Greek word for 'pearl'), the latter available to the poet as a learned synonym for 'pearl' (199, 206, 1037). The pearl was also often used figuratively in commendations of female excellence. Particularly relevant is the love lyric beginning 'A wayle [excellent creature] whyt ase whalles bon, A grein [pearl] in golde that godly shon' (*Harley Lyrics* 9/1–2).
- 3 **orient:** where the best pearls came from. The rivers in the Far East were thought to flow directly from the Earthly Paradise and to carry with them the pearls and precious stones with which Paradise had long been associated (cf. Mandeville, *Livre* 468).
- 4–5 **precious** has a double meaning, 'valuable' and 'dear', appropriate to 'pearl' as both object and person. **aray** likewise has both its narrower sense [clothing] and its wider one [condition], **reken in uch aray** applying to the jewel ('fair in every setting') and to the person it figures ('beautiful in every costume'; cf. 'worthliest in ich a wede': *Amis* 443). The pronoun **her** (cf. 6, 8 and 9) similarly allows for both possibilities, and the ModE pronoun system cannot convey its ambiguity. In ME the pronoun *hit* [it] figured regularly only as the subject of the verb, the oblique forms being *his* and *him*, or – if the antecedent noun (in this case from French *la perle*) was clearly feminine by derivation – *her*; it is noteworthy that, in the subject case (10), where a feminine pronoun would *not* normally be selected for an

inanimate, the poet uses the pronoun **hit**, not *she* (which would make for less ambiguous personification).

- 6 **smal**: applicable to the jewel in the meaning ‘small’, but also to the girl in the sense ‘slender’ which the word frequently bore when applied to female beauty, in which connection the words **smal**, **smothe**, **white** and **sides** often figure: Gordon cites Criseyde’s ‘armes smale ... sydes longe ... smothe, and white ... snowissh throte’ (*Troilus* III.1247–50).
- 11 **luf-daungere**: in amorous contexts *daunger* indicated a force that thwarted the lover’s desires and referred either to the lady’s own reluctance or standoffishness, or to any circumstances (distance, watchfulness or suspicion from a husband or relatives) that denied him access to the object of his love. The poet here attributes the suffering typical of the frustrated lover to the bereaved father, for whom the distance and separation by which love is frustrated are non-negotiable and absolute.
- 12 **privy**: in context probably ‘concealed, hidden’ rather than, as at 24, ‘very own’; the latter sense is more natural with **my** (24) than with **that**, which implies what is distant and removed from the speaker, **that privy** thus reinforcing the separation implied by **luf-daungere** (11).
- 14–16 Jewels were believed to possess *virtues* [powers], warding off particular dangers or ensuring particular benefits. These lines thus continue the allegory of bereavement as the loss of a jewel, a **wele** [something that brings well-being or good fortune] which had warded off ill-fortune and misery (15) and ensured **hap** [good fortune] and **hele** [health].
- 19 **sange**: the meaning is unclear. The semantic correspondence between the verbs **stele** (20) and **fleten** (21) suggests that **fele** [many] at 21 refers back to **sange** and not to **stounde** (20). Since sounds of **sange** therefore appear to be prompted by thoughts of the pearl in the earth (22), the word can scarcely denote literal, external sounds of any kind. Gordon suggests that *song* refers to the poem itself. The metaphor was certainly common and would be appropriate to verse so richly and intricately musical. The lines would then mean that, paradoxically (**Yet**: 19), the sweetest of verses would come into his head when the mourner thought of his pearl in the earth.
- 25 **mot nedes**: the modal verbs (cf. **may not**, 29, **myght fayle not**, 34) indicate that the mourner is at present merely picturing the grave. The spot where his daughter’s body is rotting is, in the second and third stanzas, visited by him in imagination, first in revulsion (22–4) and then in a more positive spirit (25–36), as the pearl is imagined as a seed from which fragrant and colourful

plants will grow. This conceit convinces him that beauty must be there: indicative **schines** at 28 contrasts with the modal verbs. He then visits the spot in person at 37–8.

- 31 **graynes**: *grain* was frequently applied to jewels, and is used of a ‘pearl’ of a woman (‘A grein in golde’) in *Harley Lyrics* (see n. to **line 1**). The term thus assists in the figurative conflation of pearl and seed that takes place in this stanza. That plants grow from the ‘death’ (the rotting and sprouting) of a seed, was an observation made familiar by two well-known biblical references to that fact (John 12:24–5; 1 Corinthians 15:35–8), both of which use that agricultural reality as a figure for the birth from bodily death into spiritual life. The mourner’s consolation, however, is at this stage derived from the sensual delights of the literal, botanical ‘new growth’ that has occurred, the spiritual point presaged by this being one that he cannot yet grasp (see **51–6**).
- 39 **high sesoun**: as is clear from the next line, the festival is Lammas [‘loaf-Mass’], 1 August, when the first fruits of the new harvest were offered up in thanksgiving and when, originally, the new corn provided the bread for the Eucharist. The season thus makes a present truth of the observation at 31–2 in the previous stanza: that the death of grains results in the reaping of wheat.
- 44–5 **Gilofre, gyngure and gromyloun, And pyonys**: all (including peonies) were valued as spice-bearing plants. The mourner’s prediction that his own buried pearl-seed would have flowered into colourful **spyces** (25) is immediately confirmed, to become, like the harvest, a visibly present fact. Their fragrance (46) is to be a factor in the onset of the ‘fit of sleep’ during which the coming dream occurs (57–8), their **fayr** odour complementing the **swete** song and **semely** colourfulness (46, 19, 45) to produce from the *spot* of corrupting flesh an effluence of effects grateful to the senses.
- 52 **resoun**, here used as a quasi-personification, was in this period a moral term, and referred to ‘rightness’ or ‘justice’ (cf. 665) and to the faculty that distinguishes right from wrong; participial **saght** designated absence or cessation of discord or resentment, and *set saght* meant ‘make peace, cause reconciliation’ (cf. 1201). Line 52 thus indicates that the mourner knew it would be *right* to ‘come to terms with’ his loss.
- 53 **penned** (MS *spenned*): as A&W (who also emend) note, the MS reading would involve self-rhyme, which the poet normally avoids (the only clear exceptions being 1000:1007 and 1108:1112). The emendation is further supported by the pattern of alliteration in this stanza: all verbs except for **schot** (58), which rhymes with the refrain word, alliterate with word(s) in

the same line.

- 55 The **comfort** available through the **kynde** [nature] of Christ is the promise of life after death held out by the physical and moral nature of a merciful God who rose from the dead. But these persuasions of **resoun** (52) and faith are here relegated to concessive clauses (**Thagh**: 52, 55) in a parallelism that equates them as joint losers against grief in a psychomachia (an allegory of psychic conflict).
- 56 **wraghte**: the metaphor appears to be from an aching body part: cf. 'Swa werkes ay the wanges [teeth] in his heed' (Reeve's Tale, CT I.4030).
- 64 The vocabulary imports into the context of a spiritual journey some of the excitement and wonder proper to chivalric romance, rich in **aventure** and **mervayles** (cf. *G* 27–9, 92–5, 479–90); **gon** (63) ... **In aventure** probably implies 'gone into unfamiliar terrain', like the knight on a quest (cf. *G* 1808).
- 65 **in this world**: before an interrogative and after a negative (especially with the verb *wit*) this expression is normally a mere intensifier (cf. 293 and *OED world* 20a(a)); here it has more significance, as his location is something the dreamer gradually deduces to be in the vicinity of the Earthly Paradise (137, 248).
- 66 **cleven**: the gloss 'clove the air, rose aloft' (Gordon and A&W) is unsupported by any other recorded use of the verb. *MED* assigns **cleven** to *cleven* v¹ [stick, adhere], including it under sense 4 [remain, abide, endure], but the implied sense ('were set fast') is weak and again without clear parallel. The interpretation offered in our footgloss assumes a sense ('to be divided') that is well attested in *MED* sv *cleven* v² [split] 2.
- 71–2 It was precisely with jewels that **webbes** [cloths] were **Dubbed** (73) for especially splendid effect, in the case of both garments and wall hangings (see 202 and *G* 193).
- 80 **schrylle** is elsewhere in ME always found with reference to sound. The application to visual rather than to aural effect represents an inspired transference (whose ground is intensity of sense impression): *OED* records no comparable figurative usage of the word before Tennyson.
- 83 **blynde** [dim] was sometimes used in a semi-technical sense to describe non-precious, lustreless stones. The usage adds extra point to the hyperbolic reversal of a common similitude for brightness: whereas a jewel might elsewhere be described as sparkling as brightly as the sun (as at *G* 1819), this jewelled landscape would reduce the sun itself, by comparison, to a non-sparkling stone.
- 86 **Garten**: the *-en* suffix indicates plural subject. Gordon assumed

scribal error, but **adubblement** (85), here a collective noun, may have been felt as plural (cf. **The dubbement ... Were** at 109–10); the intervening noun **downes** (85) may also have influenced the verb (cf. C 385 and n.).

- 90 **flaumbande**: the verb was often applied to jewels and precious metals (as at C 1468). Though it ravishes the other senses as well as that of sight (87–94), this is primarily a jeweller's paradise.
- 95 **gle** had a general sense of 'delight', but also the more specific ones of 'music' (cf. 'glee-man') and 'radiance' (*MED gle* n¹ 2a, 3(a) and 4). In different senses it is therefore appropriate to both hearing and seeing (96).
- 107 **by schore that scheres**: cf. Douglas's description of the Tiber 'Throu fertill feildis scheryng thar and heyr' (*Aeneid* VIII.i.99). **schore** is always used of a steep slope near water: it refers, not to the land which immediately bounds the water, but to the area over which the ground beside it rises to its full height (as is clear from 166 and 230).
- 114–16 With the first simile, cf. the lady whose beauty is as bright 'As sonne that schynes throw glasse' (*Ipomadon* 5022), though the comparison is more aptly applied in *Pearl*; the second simile ('as clear as stars in a frosty night') is also used of stones in a river-bed in Dunbar's *Golden Targe* 36 (see p. 11).
- 115 **strothe**: common in personal and place names, but occurring otherwise only here and at G 1710. It is part of the poet's wide repertoire of topographical terms, many of them of regional or local currency (Elliott 1984, Gordon l–lii).
- 123–4 *Abate*, *fordo* and *distrye* could all be used in medical senses, with reference to the assuagement of swelling and the expulsion or dispelling of disease or toxicity from the body. **Bylde** – which stands in general contrast with all three verbs, and in immediate contrast with **abated** – could represent either of two verbs: *belden* [embolden, encourage], which acquired such extended meanings as 'strengthen, help, support, sustain, nourish' (*MED belden* 1(a), *OED bield* v), or *bilden* [build]. *MED*, following Gordon and A&W, assumes the latter, used in a nonce sense of 'aroused joy'. But the usage here seems more consonant with some of those recorded under *belden*; the sense 'strengthened, nourished' would be consistent with the promotion and increase of some healthful quality implied by the antithetical structure and medical logic at work in 123–4.
- 127 **floty**: usually explained as a nonce adjective derived from the verb *fleten* [float] and glossed 'well-watered' by *MED*, in which it figures as the sole instance cited. It is more likely to be a variant of the attested adjective *flodi*, *fludy* [pertaining to a river, river-

rich], which derives from the noun *flod*, also spelled *flot*; cf. ME *stremi* [endowed with running stream(s)].

- 128 **straynes**: metaphorical uses of this verb usually involve painful rather than pleasant emotions; it is by ‘anguish’, ‘sorrow’, ‘pity’, etc, that persons and hearts were ‘strained’ (i.e. ‘wrung’); see *MED streinen* v¹ 3(c), (e). The suggestion is thus that the mourner’s mind and heart are as overtaxed now by a painful intensity of joy as they were earlier by the grief under which he had collapsed into unconsciousness (49–60); the implied parallel gives pertinence to the gnomic comment that follows (129–32).
- 137–42 The dreamer makes three interrelated assumptions (**thought ... hoped ... hoped**) about this wondrous realm which he still takes to be of *this* world: (a) that it is so delightful that he must be in the vicinity of the Earthly Paradise (137–8), a place thought of as naturally rich in precious stones (cf. Genesis 2:12 and *PP* B.10.12: ‘al the precious perree [jewellery] that in paradis wexeth’), and also as locatable in this world, in which it was assumed (and on maps often actually shown) to be somewhere in the East, not in another world (Delumeau 1995: 39–70); the dreamer of *Roman de la rose* similarly finds the garden he enters so *delitables* that he believes himself to be *en paradis terrestre* (636–7); (b) that the water is part of the design of some magnificent pleasure garden (139–40) such as that described in *Romaunt of the Rose* 1412–16 (*Roman de la rose* 1383–7): ‘But I ne can the number telle Of stremys smal that by *devys Myrthe* [Pleasure] had don come through condys [conduits], Of whiche the water in rennyng Gan make a noyse ful lykyng [pleasing]’ (cf. **devise** and **mirthes** at *Pe* 139–40); (c) that such an exquisite pleasure garden must form part of some great estate centred on a court and castle lying somewhere across the stream (141–2). **devise** (139) is often glossed ‘division’, but that is not its usual sense, and *Pe* 139 is the only example cited in support of such a meaning (sv *devis* 5) in *MED* (though Gordon adduces a later Scots instance). The *stremys smal* in the *Romaunt of the Rose* are not intended as a ‘division’ but as a *device* to enhance pleasure. This is the role the dreamer here assumes for the water before him – which is why he is puzzled to find it (143–54) acting as a ‘division’.
- 141 **slente** occurs as a topographical term only here in ME (cf. n. to 115).
- 151–3 **wotthes ... wonde**: the same collocation (and rhyme on **wonde/honde**) occurs at *G* 487–90, where the narrator adjures the hero ‘For wothe that thou ne wonde This aunter for to frayn That thou has tan on honde.’ To **wonde** or flinch from a course of action because of **wothe** testified to want of spirit and

perseverance; the dreamer thus feels he should not be weakly 'put off' by the dangers and difficulties the stream unexpectedly presents.

- 155 Cf. *Rowlande and Ottuell* 49, 'Bot now come tham newe note one hande' (i.e. something else came up to occupy the attention) and WA 4918, 'And namely a new note neghis on hand'.
- 163 **bleaunt**: an overgarment of costly silken stuff, associated with the courtly echelons of high society (cf. *G* 879, 1928).
- 165 **gold ... schere**: cf. 213, where the girl's hair shines like **schorne** gold. The verb probably represents 'shear' [cut], the reference being to the practice of cutting gold into thin strips to make gold thread or *fil d'or* (Gordon). The comparison of hair with such gold wire was a standard one (cf. *Harley Lyrics* 7/12, *Pistel of Susan* 192, *MED gold adj* 2(a)) and underlies the **schorne gold** of 213. It is easy to see why the colour and thread-like texture of fair hair might elicit the analogy. But the ground of the comparison at 165 seems to be simply shine, as with the explicit comparison of the riverbanks with *fil d'or* at 106. The verbs in the three cases (**brent**, **schon**, **schon**) give a similar emphasis.
- 166 **schore**: see n. to 107.
- 170 **fonte** occurs in the MS at 327 as past participle of 'find', and is construed as such here by Gordon and subsequent editors, who gloss 'noticed' or 'perceived'. But the line must then be read as a somewhat redundant parenthesis ('once I had caught sight of her fair person'). *OED* and *MED* include **fonte** here under *fonden* [test, examine], which follows on more aptly from the preceding line: 'The more I **frayste** [examined] her fair face, (and) when I had scrutinized her fair form ...' The alliterative collocation of **fonte** (< *fonden*) and **frayste** goes back to OE (*Soliloquies of St Augustine* 35) and survived into the fifteenth century, when it occurs in *Towneley Plays* 4.53 ('My servand I will found and frast').
- 172 'As had been but little wont to do so before' is the sense suggested by Gordon and A&W. However, the position of **little**, preceding **before** rather than **wont**, indicates that we are here dealing with the common expression *little ere*, *little before* [a short time previously] (see *OED little adv* C.2). The dreamer experiences a full-hearted joy such as, before her recent death, the girl had regularly made him feel – and her identity is thus confirmed partly in the re-experience of feelings formerly associated with her.
- 178 **white as playn yvore**: whiteness of skin (an attribute of ideal female beauty) often attracted comparisons with ivory, whale's bone (212), snow, lilies (195, 753), and ivory (cf. Chaucer, *Book*

of the Duchess 946); the precise comparison with **playn** [smooth, polished] ivory does not occur elsewhere in ME, but is found in French (e.g. 'Le front blanc et poli con ivoire planés': *Venus*, stanza 158). With regard to the face, rosiness, **rich red**, or commingled **white and red in blande** (G 952, 1205), were often commended, but that common notion is here excluded in favour of the pure whiteness that furthers the identification of child with pearl, though in terms still consistent with the courtly beauty which functions to convey her spiritual refinement to her father's mortal understanding.

- 179 **atount** is nowhere else attested. We assume (with Gordon) derivation from OF *atoner*, a synonym of *estoner*. The alternative is to emend to *astount*, but *astound* does not occur in the MS, which consistently has *sto(w)ned*.
- 182 **stille** can mean both 'without noise' and 'without motion', and, in view of the coming comparison with the hawk (184), the sense 'submissively' (cf. *Pa* 402, *G* 2385) is also in play: the dreamer is the tamed 'creature' of the vision before him, as tautly attentive to its minutest detail as a hawk to its master's slightest hint (184).
- 184 **hende** meant 'courteous' or 'gracious' when applied to equals or superiors, but when used of inferiors had a sense closer to its etymon, OE *gehende* [at hand], which denoted a 'prompt' and 'obedient' retainer. The hawk often figures in scenes set within hall (e.g. *Beowulf* 2263–4, *CT* I.2204); its highly trained obedience would have been especially necessary indoors, and 'as hende as hawk in (living quarters)' was semi-proverbial (cf. *Harley Lyrics* 6/28). The special aptness of the comparison at this point is explained in 183: the wide eyes and closed beak of the tamed and silent bird of prey provide a visual emblem of the compulsive looking and paralysed dumbness of the dreamer. The simile invites comparison with that of the paralysed quail (1085) and of the stricken beast (345–6). All imply an elemental intensity of shock in a lower order of being: in the world in which the mourner finds himself, he stands as do brute beasts (or madmen: 267, 290, 359, 1166) to rational humans in this world.
- 185 **gostly** often means 'spiritual', and may do so here. But since the dreamer does not yet know that it is his daughter's heavenly spirit that he sees before him (cf. 282), the sense may rather be – as when it is used to describe speech from a severed head (*G* 2461) – 'supernatural, spooky': the dumbstruck dreamer suspects (as do the speechless and mesmerized courtiers of Camelot: *G* 240) that there is something paranormal at work. **purpose** means either 'agency' (an extension of the attested senses of 'intention', 'cause') or perhaps 'manifestation, phenomenon', in accord with

the sense of the corresponding verb (i.e. ‘offer, present, make outwardly manifest’: *MED purposen* 3(d), (f)).

- 189 **withouten galle** recalls the **perle withouten spot** of the first section. **galle** is found in the general sense of ‘(spot of) filth, scum’ only in this corpus of poems (cf. 915, 1060 and *Pa* 285); other ME usages derive from the two senses (‘bile’, ‘inflamed spot’) of OE *gealla*.
- 190 **So smothe, so smal**: the description of the girl identifies her with the lost pearl, **So smal, so smothe** (6); **smal** has the double sense ‘small’ and (of a person) ‘slender’ (see n. to 6). **slyght**, glossed ‘slender’ by previous editors, and by *OED* and *MED*, does not otherwise occur in that sense with reference to personal physical build until much later. Its regular ME sense of ‘smooth, even, of sleek and glossy surface’, is perfectly acceptable in context, where it reinforces **smothe**. Both adjectives, when applied to people, were generally predicated of skin. The girl’s person is thus described by three epithets that assimilate her to the pearl that represents her and everywhere adorns her garments.
- 192ff The detailed description of the costume and ornamentation of the girl invites comparison with that of the Green Knight (*G* 151–220): both persons are unexpected figures, whose appearance strikes their viewers dumb (with 182 cf. *G* 243–5); both are dressed with bejewelled elegance, and the distinctive visual impact they make is created by exclusive concentration (in skin, jewels, clothes) on a single colour; both are of aristocratic status (knight and queen), as is evident simply in the profusion of jewels figuring in their accessories.
- 195 Both the word **fresch** and the comparison with a lily figure frequently in references to female beauty: see *MED lilie-flour* (a) and *fresh adj* 6a(b); cf. n. to 178.
- 196 The girl is moving down the opposite sloping bank towards the water’s edge (see n. to 107).
- 198 **bounden**: used of fabric to which jewels have been sewn or otherwise attached (cf. *G* 609).
- 201 **lappes large**: long, hanging sleeves were fashionable and bespoke wealth and class: cf. the ‘duchess’ whose gown has ‘ladily lappes, the lenghe of a yerde’ [*lappes* a yard long, in the manner of a great lady] (*MA* 3254).
- 202 **double perle**: unexplained. Pearls ‘in double rows’ (Gordon) and ‘paired pearls’ (Vantuono) give plausible sense, but posit usages unattested elsewhere. Since *double* was a common way of signalling a particularly large specimen (*MED double adj* 5), the meaning may be simply ‘the largest kinds of pearl’. The mourner’s

appreciation of the sight before him is coloured by the professional interests of a jeweller: as the girl approaches, he registers his ‘heaven-sent’ opportunity (**grace**, 194) to see some pretty exceptional pearls, and the emphasis in the description falls decidedly (as in the comparable description of the Green Knight in *G* 151ff) on the jewellery and precious metalwork of her *ensemble*. There was at this period a close link between the clothing and jewellery professions, a link at its most evident in the fashionable taste for jewel-studded dress; indeed, pearls were normally pierced, partly for those purposes (Campbell 1991: 139, 151).

- 205–9 The crown has a double spiritual significance which is explained later (445–56, 767–8), as is that of the girl’s clothing (767–9, 791). At this stage, the ‘worth’ it betokens is conveyed to the dreamer through the medium of secular and courtly value, what he sees, with a goldsmith’s eye, being very much a real crown, and one which is technically described: the component ‘parcels’ of a crown are listed precisely as **pinacles**, **flowres** [fleurons] and **stones** in a document of 1430 (quoted in *MED* sv *pinacle* (b)). See also the magnificent pearl crown (with pinnacles and fleurons), probably belonging to Anne of Bohemia (Richard II’s queen): Saul 1999: plate 16. **flurted** is not recorded in ME, but the verb occurs in OF with the meaning ‘adorn with floral motifs’; cf. the reference to a shield *fleureté de fleur de lys* (cited in *DMF* sv *fleureter* I.A).
- 205 **gyrle**: both ME senses of the word are relevant here. The original application of the word was to a ‘child’ (of either sex); but the sense ‘young woman’ was also current by this date. For the reader (who does not yet know that this is the spirit of a toddler), the first meaning appears ruled out by the very *unpuerile* nature of a figure possessing the composure and gravity of a magnate (211). The word thus represents both what the *girl* was and what she has become.
- 209 **werle**: conjecturally derived (by *OED*) from *wear* + *le* and glossed ‘covering, attire’, and (by *MED*) from OE *waerlan* [turn, go] and so perhaps indicating a ‘circlet’.
- 210 The MS reads *Her lere leke ...*, on which much editorial ingenuity has been expended. Gordon emends **lere** to *here* [hair], producing good sense, if stilted syntax (‘Her hair enclosed – lying all around her – her **semblaunt**’, etc), but this removes the alliteration and anticipates the hair (which seems not to be dealt with until 213). *MED* adopts the interpretation of *lere leke* as an (otherwise unattested) compound (face-*lake* [fine linen]) and glosses ‘wimple’; but this leaves 210–13 without a finite verb, and

contradicts the poet's clear statement that the girl had *no* other covering on her head save the *crown* (209, 214). The insertion of *hit* between *lere* and *leke*, and the interpretation of *leke* as past tense of *louken* [lock: cf. *G* 1830], make it possible to retain both alliterating words in a way that makes sense in context. The dreamer's eyes are moving down from the crown to the face framed by it, and the three successive near-synonyms (**lere**, **semblaunt**, **ble**) in 210–12 create a pause on this central feature, so compelling in its whiteness and gravity. *Louken* and *umbe-go* had connections with, respectively, the setting of jewels and decoration: framed by the crown (and by the loose-hanging hair), the white face increasingly resembles a pearl set in gold (cf. 1–2 and 215–16).

212–13 Both comparisons were traditional in the praise of beautiful women: see e.g. *Harley Lyrics* 9/1, 7/12. See also nn. to **165** and **178**.

214 **unlapped** [uncovered, unwrapped]: the emphasis on this point (cf. 209) is significant. Only young, unmarried girls – and, apparently, brides and queens – wore their hair loose. All other adult women (i.e. wives and religious) by convention wore hair-coverings. The girl's uncovered hair is thus consonant both with the age of innocence and maidenhood at which she died and with the royal and bridal status into which she has therefore been translated (Lucas 1977).

217 **poyned** (from French *poignet*) is a semi-technical term that a draper-jeweller might use (see n. to **202**): all other recorded instances of the word occur in (mostly French or Latin) factual and formal documents (wardrobe accounts, inventories, glossaries, etc).

220 **burnist**: not 'polished' (Gordon) but 'decorated with shiny matter', as when banners or hangings were said to be 'burnished' with gold (cf. *MED burnishen* (d)). The line thus provides, not an unnecessary reminder of the bright white of the girl's clothing interrupting an account of the white pearls set on it, but a summary of the previous three lines: 'And (thus) it was with white (gems) that her apparel was brightly set off'.

221–2 As with her dress and crown (see n. to **205–9**), this pearl – literally and figuratively central to the girl's *parure* – is to be endowed with spiritual symbolism in section XIII (733–42); but it too is seen at this point simply as so ideal a *pearl* as to defy description even by the connoisseur who beholds it (223–6). Since it is described as **set** (cf. **pyght**, 742) at the centre of her breast, this arch-pearl probably takes the form of an institched brooch rather than a pendant.

- 223 **demme**: interpreted by previous editors as the verb *demmen* [dam] and glossed ‘be frustrated, be baffled’, etc. But no such metaphorical usage of that verb is recorded anywhere else. It is more likely to be the verb *dimmen* [become dim, grow dark], for ‘darkening’ is a common metaphor in expressions denoting failure of intellectual ‘sight’ (see *MED* sv *derken* 5(b)). Spellings showing the lowering of *i* to *e* are not uncommon (cf. WA 561, 905, 3477). See also n. to **demmed** at C 384.
- 224 Cf. ‘And make the mater to malt my mynde withinne’ [and make the sense (of the writing) present to my mind] (C 1566). The purport of the mysterious message does not yet ‘melt’ into Belshazzar’s mind (cf. ‘sink in’ in *ModE*), while the dreamer of *Pearl* conversely feels the impossibility of his **mynde** ‘melting into’ the **wonder perle** (221).
- 225 **endure**: for the sense ‘have power enough to extend to’, ‘suffice’, cf. the reference in Walton’s *Boethius* 3.pr.8 to the want of X-ray vision in human eyes, ‘wiche mowe noght endure What that thou art withynne forth for to see’ (p. 159).
- 226 **saverly**: glossed ‘fitting, adequate’ (Gordon, A&W, *MED*), but the adjective surely means ‘wise’ or ‘demonstrating a true mental sense of the matter’: cf. *MED savour* 7(a) (‘knowledge, understanding’), *savouren* v 8 (‘know, comprehend, understand’) and ‘who evere wol understonde the wordes of Crist plainly and saverly ...’ (*Imitatione Christi* 2).
- 230 **doun the schore**: i.e. down the opposite sloping bank towards the water’s edge; cf. 166, 107 and n.
- 233 **nerre then aunt or nece**: the first unambiguous indication to the audience that the bond attaching the bereaved ‘jeweller’ to his ‘pearl’ is one of kinship rather than romance; since the criterion of ‘nearness’ here alluded to is plainly that of blood-relationship with a female, the line suggests the pearl was a daughter or sister (the former being the more probable object of the violent affliction and of the possessive relationship indicated by ‘my pearl’). That the bereavement was that of an *infant* daughter is still to be revealed (483).
- 235 **profered** is usually glossed ‘offered’; but, in a poem so minutely attentive to sequence, the anticipation of the actual greeting in 238 would be anomalous. *Profer* here indicates preparation for, or signal of an invitation to, a forthcoming action (see *MED profren* 3(a), (b), (f) and 5); the verb characterizes the ensuing actions and brief greeting (236–8) as an offer of readiness for interchange (**profered me speche** = offered me an opportunity for speech), but one which (with model filial decorum) leaves the father to initiate it. **spyce** was a common term of praise for a lady: cf.

- 238 The girl's **lyght** [pleasant, good-humoured] tone is also a mark of her courtly poise; *hevinesse* [moroseness, melancholy] in social intercourse was often deprecated: 'Be stabulle of chere and sumwhat lyght' is the advice given in *Boke of Curtesye* 321.
- 244 **longing** (cf. 1180) was often used, not precisely in the sense of 'yearning', but with more general reference to 'grief' occasioned by care for, and anxiety about, a loved person – who, in this oeuvre, is actually never a sweetheart, but a relative (as here and at C 779 and 1003) or a loved and valued friend (G 540).
- 245 **aglyghte**: the form with prefix is found only here. *Glyghte* is used in the other poems of this MS, and elsewhere, to mean 'glanced, looked' (see *Pa* 453, *G* 842, 970; cf. *MED* *glien* 2); in *Pearl* alone is it used (as verbs of such sense often were) of light ('glistened': 114) and (with prefix, in the present line) of movement ('slid').
- 254 **gray**: always used to describe the colour of the eyes of a typical medieval beauty; cf. the reference to the beautiful Guinevere **with iyen gray** at G 82. Though it is often surmised that the colour meant must have been blue or blue-grey, instructions for painting eyes actually specify the mixing of white and black (to obtain *veneda*) (Theophilus 7).
- 257 **Sir, ye**: the form of deference to the authority of a father is again preserved in the pearl's model courtesy: in the title of respect (**Sir**) and in the pronouns (**ye, your**) with which she addresses him. But, just as she soon replaces (255) the crown she had politely doffed (237), equally soon does she drop the daughter's upward **ye** for the teacher's downward **thou** (263–4) – a form of address which no fourteenth-century child would normally have used to a parent, though it would have been very natural from a father to a daughter (and is at first the one this father instinctively uses: see 242ff). The concise yet discreet word **mysetente** [misheeded] is not recorded elsewhere.
- 259 **cofer** was a term used (as was **forser** at 263) to describe chests in which valuables were stored. The vessels of jewelled precious metal in *Cleanness* are stored in **coferes** (1428), which are also referred to as the natural receptacle for *gemmes* and *iuwels* at WA 4164 ('nouthire gemmes ne iuwels in cofirs').
- 264 **gentyl jueler**: the girl takes up the jewel–jeweller logic, but the vocabulary of courtliness is shifted by her from material to moral, as indicated by the move from **gemmes gent** (253) to **gentyl jueler**. She urges on her father a **gentyl** [gracious] response to events: only a petulant jeweller could not accept and appreciate the safe-keeping coffer (263) generously provided for one of his jewels.

- 267–75 The force of the ME adjective **mad** is rather different from that of its ModE counterpart. It implies here ‘extravagantly foolish to the point of perverseness’, for the girl’s argument postulates a perversity of response re-emphasized in the antitheses of 274–5: the jeweller views as a ‘theft’ an event that created *something* out of the *nothing* he lost and so supplied a gem he did not have, a **bote** [remedy] which he complains of as a **meschef** [injury].
- 271 **kyst** [chest] continues and extends the metaphor introduced in the previous verse (**cofer**, **forser**: 259, 263), by which the pearl’s new location is represented as a ‘jewel-box’, not only gracefully appropriate to her (259–60), but actually transforming her (271–2) into the jewel it worthily safeguards.
- 272 **of pris** and **put in pref** correspond to the words *pretium* [price, value] and *probare* [to assay, test, prove the authenticity of] that recur in lapidaries. This semi-technical register reinforces the girl’s logic: before her death, she was not a **gemme** (266), being a ‘precious pearl’ only in her father’s fond imagination; it was her death that authenticated that metaphor, acting as the jeweller’s assay or **pref** to validate an analogy which previously had nothing in **kynde** [nature] to substantiate it. For the **kynde** (270) which ruled the earth where the girl lived, and where things **flowred and fayled**, determined her as a perishable **rose** (269), not a **gemme**; the **kynde** of the present **kyst** (271) is different, and can give her the status of a jewel **of pris** (272). The lines imply that an entity is determined by the **kynde** of its context, which also determines the correct metaphor for what is contained within it (perishable ‘rose’ or durable and precious ‘pearl’).
- 274 Cf. ‘God ... that ... gonne the world make, And of naught madest aught ...’ (*PP* B.5.481–2).
- 276 **kynde** has here double force. Its appeal is partly (as with **gentyl** at 264) to courtly values: in resenting an event which created a pearl for him *ex nihilo* (274), the jeweller is being ungracious (cf. *OED kind adj* 8: ‘grateful, thankful’). But he is also acting counter to **kynde** [nature], i.e. behaving as a most ‘unnatural’ jeweller, in taking it ill when presented with a pearl he did not before have.
- 277–8 **juel ... jueles**: *jewel* was commonly used figuratively to convey the value of something, as with the reference to the girdle at *G* 1856 as a **juel for the joparde** the knight is about to face (*MED juel* 2(a)). The idiom is here applied, to punning effect, to the reassurance the mourner has just received from his ‘pearl’; the sense is thus ‘She and her courtly words were indeed jewels to me at that moment’.
- 290 **mad** in the context of **bourde** [jest] has the sense ‘wanton,

madcap' (*MED* *mad* *adj* 3(b)); cf. 'ye shall hyre the myrryeste [most facetious] knyght that ever ye spake wythall and the maddyst talker' (Malory 693); the girl (who must know the dreamer spoke in earnest, not in jest) is thus using the word in a different sense and with more sarcastic force than at 267.

- 294 In its forceful brevity, the line has an idiomatic, proverbial ring to it. But no other instance of the traditional alliterative pairing of **word** and **wyt** to serve this point is recorded in Whiting.
- 300 **joyful**: the adjective the 'jeweller' himself has focused on (252, 288) – as opposed to those the girl has urged on his attention (**gentyl** and **kynde**: 264, 276) – is picked up by the latter only to mark, with dismissive irony, its irrelevance: being **joyful** is not a passport across the divide into her world; more promising access (of a limited kind) is through the route suggested by her own adjectives.
- 303 **uncortayse**: the first of the jeweller's 'errors' is presented, not as a theological failure of faith in the assurances of Holy Writ, but as a social failure in courtesy which insults an honourable lord by implicitly impugning his veracity and reliability (304).
- 305 **your lif to rayse**: the reference is to the promises of an afterlife in Scripture, and **lif** here is comparable to Vulgate usage of *anima*, a word for 'life' that is also used to refer to 'soul' or 'spirit' as opposed to *caro*, the corruptible **flesch** (306). The expression might also have been suggested by Jonah 2:7 (*et sublevabis de corruptione vitam meam*), a text certainly well known to the poet of *Patience*.
- 307 **westernays**: unexplained. A form of OF *bestorneis* [turned round, reversed] – which, because it 'could be applied to a church which faced west instead of east' (Gordon), has been influenced by *west* – is an elegant conjecture often repeated. *Weste* [empty] *ernest* [pledge] – suggested by Hillmann (1943) – is plausible ME and gives the sense required in context, but does not very well fit the syntactic frame **setten ... ful**. For *set* in the sense 'rate', cf. line 8.
- 309 **a poynt of sorquydrye**: in theological contexts, **sorquydrye** figured (in the sense 'presumption' or 'overweening') as a subdivision of the deadly sin of pride, occurring 'when a man demeth himself more worthi than he is' (*Myroure to Lewde Men* 106), and one instance or **poynt** (309) of it lies in the egotism that trusts only to its own judgement (cf. 311–12): 'Be not selfwitty, ne surquyderous, but be buxom to resceyve and bileve all good counsaile' (226).
- 315 **bayle**, originally the outer wall or outer courtyard of a castle or keep, is consistent with the courtliness in terms of which heaven is imagined in this poem.

- 318–24 Cf. St Brendan's journey to the Land of Promise, where he and his monks encounter a 'fayre rever' they dare not cross, and are told that 'this water that thu seyst here departith the worlde asondre. And in that other syde of this water maye no man come while he is here in this lyffe' (*Brendan* 271). In *Pearl*, this river = 'death' remains, throughout their encounter, as a narrative and visual analogue to the felt limitations of this reunion and communion between a mortal and a non-mortal.
- 340 **mo**: a small liberty for rhyming purposes: *more* would be the form consistent with the normal usage observed elsewhere in the MS, in which *mo* is otherwise always reserved for the sense 'more in number'.
- 344–8 The sturdily pragmatic reasons here advanced for acceptance of God's will are reminiscent of *Patience*, as is the alliterative antithesis of **thole** and **thro** and the verb **abide** (348; cf. *Pa* 5–8).
- 345–8 **daunce**, **Braundysch** and **bray** are all verbs associated with animal responses (to alarm, distress, etc), the metaphor here being that of the last and futile wild movements of the **do** (the female deer, more frequently hunted than the male, which was protected in the 'close season': cf. *G* 1156–7). As the hounds close in upon the deer, it leaps and tosses and cries out, but eventually finds all space for manoeuvre cut off, and is brought to bay. The primary meaning of **abide** at 348 is 'suffer, undergo', but the sense 'come to a halt' (*MED abiden* 6) is also relevant to the passive stillness in which the wildly active movements of the animal must necessarily terminate, at which point it must 'bide the bay' – as the mourner must 'bide the (metaphorical) blow' (in both of which connections *abide* was regularly used: cf. *G* 1450, 1564, 1582; 290, 1754; *Pa* 7).
- 346 **brathes breme**: the singular form *brath* [force, impetus] is not infrequently used of rage; the plural is, however, unusual, and the plural of a noun generally used in the singular can have a somewhat dismissive or reductive effect: 'all your towering passions'.
- 349 **Deme Dryhtyn**: *Demend* [judge, decreer] was in OE a common title for God; to **Deme Dryhtyn** thus suggests a logical absurdity which is further emphasized by the elaboration of the specifically legal connotations of *deme*: **adyte** [indict, arraign: 349], **mendes** [compensation, redress: 351], **flyte** [dispute: 353] also had legal senses. Protesting at the course of events ordained by Providence, is, the girl implies, like getting litigious with God, which is unlikely to intimidate Him and will not result in any 'damages' to the plaintiff.
- 358 **leme**: none of the attested meanings of the verb ('shine, give off

light') produces satisfactory sense for this line, which *MED* instead assigns to *lemen* *v*¹ – a different and rare verb of uncertain meaning, apparently indicating 'to injure' in some way. The special sense deduced by *MED* (*of ... lemen* = drive away, drive off) is not found anywhere else. Gordon emends to *fleme* [put to flight] and glosses *of fleme* 'banish'. But *fleme* is usually constructed with prepositional *of* [out of] + *noun* (cf. 334), not adverbial *of* [off, away]. It is probably vain, in fact, to seek sense by minor emendation or ingenious glossing of *leme*, since something seems to have got dropped in the middle of the line, which has, as it stands, only three stresses.

- 359 **marre or madde**: the collocation occurs also at *Awntyrs* 110; in collocation with **mourne**, *mithen* means 'to conceal or suppress one's feelings' (*MED mithen* *v*¹).
- 361 **damyselle** referred strictly to a female of rank who was not yet a *dame* (a mistress of property) through inheritance or marriage; but it was often used in a more general sense of any young girl (not known to be married) of gentle birth.
- 368 **endorde**: formerly assumed to represent a form (otherwise unattested) of 'adored'. The only other immediately obvious possibility is a form of the OF verb *endorer* [to gild]; though it occurs in ME only in the culinary sense 'to glaze', the poet could credibly have assumed familiarity with the wider application of the verb in French, and a gloss of 'gold-adorned' was proposed by Ronberg 1976. But the mineral adornment of the girl's costume is declared most emphatically to be exclusively white pearl (206, 219); if the verb is from OF *endorer*, the sense must be metaphorical.
- 371 This is a mini allegory. 'To make accord' was to settle the differences between antagonistic parties. The girl has by her death created regular coexistence and association between two 'enemies' (a man and the sorrow that is naturally inimical to him). The mourner is trying to indicate that some kindness, rather than severity, is due to a state she has herself reduced him to, and the rhetorical conceit transforms potential accusation into wry compliment.
- 375 **wroken fro uch a wothe** [delivered from every peril]: in the course of explaining his bewildered grief (cf. 376), the mourner makes his mortal's point – in less uninhibited terms than in his first outcry to the girl (244–50) – that it was precisely when she was removed from human passibility and contingency that the anguish which it causes and which she now dismisses was felt in full force by him.
- 382 **maneres**: none of the attempts to make sense of MS *marere3* are

convincing, and word is commonly emended to **maneres**.

- 401 The line is suspect: it is a syllable short and has clashing stress (inevitable in **high pryde**), which is elsewhere markedly avoided (MS *hy3e* has an unjustified *-e* which is simply graphic). Since 401–2 are close in sentiment to Proverbs 21:4, **An high look, and a proud heart** [*dilatatio cordis*] ... **is sin**, it is possible that the original read *hertes pryde*, the English equivalent of the biblical expression *dilatatio cordis* and *superbia cordis* (for which see also Isaiah 9:9, Jeremiah 49:16, Obadiah 3).
- 403 **My lord**: the possessive the girl does not use with reference to her father is bestowed instead on her *lord* (cf. 407). In view of the following stanza, the term probably carries the added sense of ‘husband’, and the pearl’s identification of herself with the interests of that **lord** has thus a double domestic logic.
- 406 **mekenisse** (MS *mekenesse*): the emendation is indicated by the rhyme with **blisse**. Variation in forms of the suffix occur in both OE (*-nes*, *-nis*, *-nys*) and ME. The scribe obviously normalized to the form in *e* always elsewhere used in the MS.
- 407 **the Lamb**: in its consistent use of the iconographic symbol of the Lamb to designate Christ, the poem is mainly following Revelation. Rev. 14 is the source of the notion of the ‘followers of the Lamb’, an élite in heaven among whom the girl is later revealed to be numbered; but the Apocalyptic significance of the Lamb is not fully apparent at this point, where the commendation of meekness provides sufficient contextual reason for the selection of the word.
- 410 **stage**: glossed ‘degree’ or ‘rank’ by Gordon and A&W. But, since that is not self-evidently what the father has indicated he ‘would like to know’, and since it is clear from 447ff that the royal dignity the girl ascribes to herself is not, in heaven, a ‘degree’ but a condition common to all, the word is probably being used in the sense of OF *estage* (‘form, situation, way of life’).
- 411 **schede**: for the use of the verb to refer to the separation of soul from body at death, cf. ‘Thanne shullen the soules of the goode, Whanne thei fro the body schede ...’ (*Sidrak* L 9208–9).
- 415 **Corounde me quene**: the mystical marriage-coronation by the Lamb is twice described in the poem: in the present instance, it turns out (447ff) to represent the crown granted to *all* the saved; but at 762–92, it is given Apocalyptic significance as a distinction bestowed specifically on that ‘innocence’ which is the defining characteristic of the élite group who are the brides of the Lamb. **brede** is a verb often applied to plant life, in which context (though variously assigned in dictionaries to the separate verbs *breden* = ‘spread, extend’, *brede* = ‘breed’) it can mean ‘rise up,

spread, grow' (cf. C 1482), or 'be in bloom' (see *brædan* in *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* and *OED breed* v 12c). Lines 414–16 thus suggest that the girl was granted in heaven the full extension of a biological life cut short on earth (411–12), complemented by full realization (416–20) of all its similarly aborted social potential, expressed here in terms of courtly status and values.

416 **wage**: the intransitive use of the verb is anomalous, and none of the senses recorded for it in ME really fit this context.

429–30 **synglerty** refers, not merely to a property of the phoenix, but also to what was supposed to be the meaning of the word: *phoenix* is explained by Isidore of Seville as an Arabic word meaning 'singular' (*Etymologies* XII.vii.22; cf. Trevisa, *Properties* I, 625). The comparison between Mary (uniquely *mater et virgo*) and the phoenix occurs elsewhere (Fletcher 1921: 15). It could also be used of other women in a secular context: Fenice, in Chrétien's *Cligés*, is declared to have been well named, for she was as singular as the bird in her peerless beauty (2685–91); and in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, the knight likens his dead lady, in her incomparability, to the 'soleyn fenix of Arabye, For ther livyth never but oon' (982–3).

431 **freles ... of her Fasor**: **freles**, which appears to mean 'without fault', does not occur elsewhere; it has been conjecturally derived from *frele* [frailty, weakness] + *less* (by Emerson 1927 and *MED*) and from ON *frýjulaust* (by Gordon). Emendation to *fereles* [without mate, matchless], suggested by Hamilton 1958: 187, is supported by A&W on the grounds that 'the emphasis in this passage is on ... uniqueness'. But matchlessness or **synglerty** (429) is in this poem always associated with spotlessness (cf. 4–8 and the **mascelles/makelles** concatenation at 732–81); and, unless 431–2 simply repeats the point made in 429–30, a new point of comparison would be appropriate: the **freles** (= flawless) quality of the bird makes it additionally **Like** (432) the Blessed Virgin by suggesting immediately the latter's traditional epithet of 'immaculate'. **of her Fasor** [creator] implies that the bird was as specially privileged by God the Creator of the physical world as Mary was in the spiritual realm by the God of Grace. Since the rhyme here is on French-derived nouns of masculine gender in *-or*, rather than feminine ones in *-ure*, **Fasor** must represent *faisor* ('maker', and in theological contexts 'Creator': see *AND* sv *faisour*) rather than *faisure* ('make, form, fashion'), which occurs as **fasure** at 1084 (see further Hillmann 1943).

432 **courtaysye** forms in this poem a ground of analogy between temporal and divine values; in this section – where, as a

concatenating word, it becomes in a specific formal sense a key connective – it is thus used to refer to the specifically theological virtues of charity (457ff) and grace.

- 439 **pray** could mean simply ‘acquisition’ (cf. Douglas, *Aeneid* X.Prol.145, ‘Thou [God] art my pryce, mak me thy praye condyng’; cf. *William* 64); but the primary sense (‘spoils, booty’) is relevant to the paradox described: though no one is dispossessed (440), there are spoils for all (439).
- 441 **emprise**: since those who acknowledge Mary as their **lady** [mistress: 453] are all monarchs, Mary herself has not mere monarchy, but ‘empire’ (cf. 454), i.e. dominion over multiple sovereignties. There is thus here a special reason for the use of a not uncommon title given to the Virgin (for other examples of Mary as ‘empress’, and of the notion of her triple dominion over heaven, earth and Hell, see *MED emperesse* 2(b)).
- 444, 456 At 443–4 the refrain **quene of courtaysye** turns the father’s objection (that Mary alone, as the acknowledged **quene of courtaysye**, 432, could be queen of heaven) back on itself by drawing into play a second sense of *quene* (‘the supreme example of a thing ... a model of a particular virtue’: *MED quene* n² 3(b)): it is precisely because she is ‘queen of *courtaysye*’ that Mary would never deprive others of the heavenly crown due to them. There is a similar double sense to the phrase at 456: Mary’s superiority is not resented by others (455) because she is both (a) the rightful queen of divine grace; and (b) the epitome of that graciousness that annuls offence.
- 445 **God alyve**: an apparently independent variation on the standard phrase (imitated from Vulgate *deus vivus*) *liviende/living God* (see *MED* sv *living(e ppl adj* 1(c)).
- 447–8 The common image of the ‘crown’ of heaven gained by each blessed soul is of biblical origin: see e.g. James 1:12 and Rev. 2:10.
- 449 For **depryve** in the specific sense ‘depose’ (*MED depriven* (b)) cf. C 1227, 1738.
- 455 **gyng**: often used of a band of personal followers, a retinue, or household: *MED ging(e* 1(b). Used of the **court** (445) of heaven (as of the court of Camelot at G 225), it stresses the corporate nature of life and identity in heaven.
- 457ff **Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit ... For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free** (1 Corinthians 12:4–13). The Pauline metaphor serves a different purpose in the

Bible, where it urges a sense of oneness to counter divisive reaction to an apparent disparity in gifts (we cannot all be prophets or have the gift of tongues); in the poem, it explains an existing unity that prevents dissatisfaction with the equality of a common supremacy in which no one is in fact superior (since all are kings and queens). This scriptural image emphasizes the notion of the more corporate nature of identity in the heavenly *court* (see n. to 455), the social ideal expressed by the word **courtaysye** becoming conflated with the perfect charity denoted by the mystical incorporation in God referred to by Paul.

- 460 The original sense of **Temen** is ‘breed, beget’; but it could also refer to a reverse (metaphorical) extension of identity: ‘accept as leader, give allegiance to, belong to the party of’ (*MED temen* v¹ 2(c); cf. *C* 9). The image here is thus of the limbs as **true and tryste** ‘adherents’ of their master (the body) – the obverse of the metaphor of every follower of the **Mayster** as (462) a mystical ‘limb’ of His spiritual entity. **tryste**: none of the efforts to make sense of MS *tyste* (see Vantuono) are convincing; Gordon’s emendation to **tryste** is supported by the frequent alliterative collocation of *true* and *trayst/trest/trist* [trusty, reliable]: see Oakden 1935: 340 and cf. *G* 2348 (‘And thou trystely the trauthe and truly me holdes’).
- 462 **myste**: arguing that spelling and rhyme militate against the possibility that this represents ME *might* [power], Gordon and later scholars posit unattested words meaning either ‘mystery’ (Gordon and A&W) or ‘ministry’ (Murtaugh 1971). However, *mist* = ‘might’ is securely attested in Central-West Midland texts; cf. ‘moder thou art of muchel mist’ (‘Prayer of the Five Joys’ 2). Since the poet, for metrical purposes, elsewhere uses forms from West Midland dialects further south than his own (Putter and Stokes 2007), a dialect form of *might* is an unproblematic assumption.
- 465 **gryste**: the noun is obviously from the verb *gristen* [grind the teeth], but is otherwise attested only in an OE glossary, where it glosses Latin *stridor* and means ‘gnashing’ (see *OED grist* n¹).
- 472 A line here has plainly been lost. Marks at the end of line 473 in the MS suggest someone noticed the omission.
- 477–8 **penaunce** was used in the broader sense of ‘suffering’ as well as the narrower one of ‘penance’: the **bodyly bale** referred to is both voluntary mortification of the flesh and patient endurance of adversity.
- 483 The line provides the first specific indication of the age at which the girl died, rendering explicit the previous emphasis on **yong** (**ful yong, so yong**: 412, 474).

- 485 The Pater Noster and the Creed, together with the Ave Maria, were the prayers which every layman was supposed to know (cf. *G* 757–8) and which were the first prayers taught to children and the first texts encountered, after the alphabet, in learning to read (Orme 2006: 59; Clanchy 1993: 247). The point is that the girl had not lived long enough to acquire even the rudiments of the Christian faith.
- 488 The etymological sense of **wrong** (which is related to *wring*) is ‘crooked, twisted’. Though the adverb was already being used in the broad moral sense of ModE ‘wrongly’, it also had senses closer to its original one, and in directional contexts conveyed ‘taking a wrong turning’ (cf. ‘al wrang I have mysyon’ in Chaucer’s Reeve’s Tale: *CT* I.4252). The word here is thus a semi-pun, belonging to both the vehicle and the tenor of the metaphor of ‘deviating from the path’ used to express the concept of God acting ‘wrongly’.
- 489–92 For the female ranking here implied (queen, countess, lady), cf. ‘Wele mare falles untill a quene Than til a countays ... And mare til a countays body Than to anothir simple lady, And mare til hir that men lady calles Than to a symple woman falles’ (*Speculum Vitae* 10633–8).
- 489 **damysel** here suggests exactly the put-down that would be implied if a modern father were to use the modern equivalent (‘young lady’) as a term of address to his daughter.
- 490 **fayr**: for the social sense here and its application to rank (cf. *OED* *fair* *adj* A.3), cf. ‘To be called a knight is fair ... To be called a kyng is fairer’ (*PP* B.19.28–9).
- 497 Cf. *Pa* 9–10 and *C* 51, where there is the same implication that a text about to be paraphrased will have come to notice because it formed one of the Gospel readings for a particular Mass. The parable of the vineyard (Matthew 20:1–16) was the reading for the Mass of Septuagesima Sunday (third Sunday before Lent).
- 498 *MED*, sv *almight* *adj* (a), records other instances of this form of ‘almighty’ as applied to God (all in rhyme, where it obviously formed a useful variant).
- 499 This absolute use of **gesse** is anomalous. It cannot here mean ‘conjecture’ (something which God is presumably never reduced to). It possibly represents an extension of the use of the word as an equivalent of Latin *aestimare* to mean ‘estimate’ or ‘evaluate (amounts, values, etc)’ (*MED* *gessen* 2(b) and (c)): ‘he makes in a parable a most just estimation (of reward due)’ would be consistent with the defence of God’s justice in this stanza (495–6), and with the reply the parable constitutes to the dreamer’s charge (469ff) that heavenly rewards, distributed on the system described to him, misestimate relative values.

- 500 **lyknes hit to:** by contrast with *ModE*, this phrasal verb could be used with the similitude as direct object and the application of it as indirect object, in which form it was thus equivalent to ‘applies (a proverb, parable, etc) to’: cf. *CT* III.368–70.
- 504 The verb **labor** was often used in agricultural contexts with the sense ‘work on (soil, crops, plants, etc) so as to make fruitful’ (cf. *OED labour* v I.1). **dere** is glossed variously by editors as ‘right’, ‘good’, ‘excellent’, but the sense here seems to be ‘all-important, crucially relevant’ – a meaning consistent with other instances in this group of poems in which **dere** refers to what critically affects or concerns someone or something: cf. *C* 214 (‘Dryhtyn with His dere dome him drof to the abyne’), 683, 1604; *StE* 193. Cf. also the sense ‘having great import or significance’ instanced in *OED* (from Shakespeare alone) sv *dere* *adj*¹ II.4b.
- 505ff **these:** here used exophorically to refer, not to persons already mentioned, but to a class familiar to writer and reader from the world outside the text – a usage common in ME (cf. ‘these true knightes’ at *G* 1514). This reference to surviving realities of the agricultural year and the work it brings is consistent with the realistic detail in which the events of the parable are imagined as a visualizably familiar scenario (there is no equivalent in the Vulgate to 503–5, 511–12 or the dialogue at 515–21); the historic present used at 508–14 contributes to this effect. The parable would in any case have been broadly recognizable in terms of the labour conditions it describes. ‘Day-labourers’ formed a well-known category in fourteenth-century society. As in the parable, they were paid in the evening (‘i the eventid hwen me yelt wercmēn hare deies hure’ [in the evening, when labourers are given their daily wage]: *Ancrene Wisse* 152), while the rate of a penny a day accords with the wage for agricultural labour at haymaking time as fixed by the Statute of Labourers of 1351 and subsequent legislation (Bowers 2001: 47).
- 509 The line forms the only entry in *MED* for this application of the verb *decline*. The expression is perhaps an inventive variation on the use of *fall* in similar contexts (‘they fell at one’, ‘she fell of his accord’, etc: see *MED fallen* 25(e) and 26, and *OED accord* n 1b).
- 512 **Kerven and caggen:** vineyards were still common in England in the poet’s day, and day-labourers were hired ‘to prune and tie up’ the vines, etc (Power 1922: 158). **man hit clos:** cf. ‘(A vineyard) is closed aboute with walles and with hegges, and a wayte [watch, guard] is there ysette in an hih place to kepe the vyneyerde that the fruyt be nought destroyed’ (*Trevisa, Properties* II, 1073–4).
- 513 **under:** *undern* was an early term for *terce*, one of the seven

canonical hours (Matins, Prime, Terce (9.00 a.m.), Sext, Nones, Vespers, Compline) whose names were used (in the centuries before timepieces became common) to refer to times of day; **Aboute under** renders *circa horam tertiam* (Matthew 20:3).

- 518 **soght** here means ‘found, got’ (*MED sechen* 9). As the lord’s question (515–16) was an implied accusation, their **answer** is probably what was found *by* them (not *from* them), i.e. ‘This was the answer they all found (to the charge)’ (cf. *Owl and Nightingale* 470, 657, 665, 705, 1573).
- 523 **runne**: *run* or *run up* (in the sense of ‘mount up’) is not uncommon with reference to money, though this is the earliest of the illustrations in *MED* (sv *rennen* v¹ 19(a)), which include ‘unto the sayde somme of too hundreth marc be fulle ron up’ and ‘unto the tyme that the som of cc marcs be ronne’ (from fifteenth-century documents).
- 524 **pay**: Hillmann and Vantuono retain MS *pray*, but only by producing from 521–4 a sense that much less exactly translates the Vulgate: *Ite et vos in vineam meam* [**Go ye also into the vineyard**], *et quod justum fuerit dabo vobis* [**and whatsoever is right I will give you**] (Matthew 20:4). **in dede and thoght** [in act and will] was a formula used to assert good faith and sincere intentions (cf. *Troilus* III.1053–4).
- 529–30 The ‘eleventh hour’ of Matthew 20:6 – the origin of the figurative use of the expression (= at the last minute) in *ModE* – is here referred to by the canonical office that marked that point of the day: Vespers, or **evensong**, was celebrated an ‘hour’ before sunset – i.e. at the eleventh of the twelve equal portions into which the time of daylight was divided, and which were called ‘hours’, but which actually varied in length according to season (summer ‘hours’ being longer than winter ‘hours’).
- 542 The **reve** (an official responsible for the financial administration of an estate) is here the equivalent of Vulgate *procurator* (Matthew 20:8); the two terms are likewise considered as interchangeable by Langland (*PP* B.19.260).
- 545–7 The detail of the **rowe**, not in the Vulgate, gives ceremonial visibility to the lord’s potentially offensive remunerative priorities and palliates them somewhat by associating them with another less offensive principle observed by him: his exaltation of the ‘lowly’ and ‘humble’ (547).
- 556 **counterfete** could be used with implications of falsehood (probably relevant here) to mean ‘falsely imitate’, or without (‘be a copy of’); the line translates *et pares illos nobis fecisti* [**and thou has made them equal unto us**] (Matthew 20:12).
- 560–64 Lines 560–61 and 563–4 are expansions on the Vulgate which

result in a greater legalistic emphasis on the lack of any contractual grounds in the complainants' claim for 'more' than their fellows; the legal register of the words **covenaunt** and **plete** [plead at law], in particular, lends to 563 the air of a legal maxim by which the plaintiffs are distinctly non-suited.

565–8 Having defended the lawfulness of the wage he has paid the complaining first-comers, the lord now defends the legitimacy of the remuneration bestowed on the later arrivals. The lines correspond to Matthew 20:14–15: *I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* [*Aut non licet mihi quod volo, facere?*] *Is thine eye evil, because I am good?*

565 **louly**: both context and the word *licet* in the corresponding passage from the Vulgate (see previous n.) suggest the meaning 'lawful, legitimate' – a meaning borne by both *laweli* and *leveli* (adjectives derived from 'law' and 'leave' respectively). Emendation of *o* to *a* or *e* is therefore one possibility (**louly** has in fact often been assumed to be a form of *lauely*, though *law-* is not recorded elsewhere spelled with *o*). Another would be to posit an adjective from the verb (*al*)*louen* [approve, accept], which also commonly referred to (legal) permission or acceptability; cf. aphetic **loues** for 'allows' at 302.

567 An 'eye' that is 'evil' is a biblical idiom connoting malice or envy (see A&W, who cite Proverbs 23:6–7 and Deuteronomy 15:9); the question thus hypothesizes a spiteful or envious instinct to find fault with a good and generous deed. For a similar rhetorical use of **Or elles** to introduce less creditable possible motivations cf. G 1528–9.

568 **non byswykes** has no parallel in the Vulgate; like 544 (also original) it stresses the lord's determination not to take advantage of the fact that the pay of the later-comers lies in his discretion. Gordon points out that the *-s* inflection on **byswykes** obeys a northern syntactic convention by which, when a pronoun (here *I*) was followed by more than one verb, the second ends in *-(e)s*, whatever the person of the pronoun (i.e. it is not a 'cheat' for the purposes of rhyme).

569–72 Except for the introduction of the metaphor of the race (**be he never so swyft**), lines 570–72 closely follow Matthew 20:16: the parable thus ends, as in the Vulgate, by defiantly compounding the apparent perversity of heavenly evaluations with a categoric assertion of not merely equality, but priority of pay for less service.

572 **mykes**: usually assumed to be an aphetic form of Latin *amicus* [friend]. The only other two instances recorded in *MED* suggest

‘close friend’ or ‘intimate’. Since the equivalent word in the Vulgate is *electi*, the sense is perhaps ‘chosen companions’.

- 573–6 The moral pointed, obviously with her own case in mind, by the girl herself picks up the symbolism of 547 to conflate God’s treatment of the ‘late’ with His merciful generosity to the ‘humble’ and ‘lowly’ – which were regular senses of both **pore** and **little** (573, 574): He does not penalize those who had no power to give more significance to their service. In the new context given to the parable, the puzzled resentment of the longer-servers is thus balanced by the grateful praise expressed by one identified with the shortest-servers, to create a more complex effect.
- 575 **atslykes**: presumably a prefixed form of *MED sliken* v2, which occurs only at *Awntyrs* 617, where it refers to a swinging blow by a sword that *slikes* from [slides from, is deflected by] chain-mail, and where it is plainly the equivalent of a French verb used with similar sense and occurring frequently in Arthurian romance in participial form (*en eslicant*) to characterize a stroke or blow.
- 577 **More have I**: the common ‘penny’ of the parable was usually interpreted as the perfect bliss of eternal life granted to all the saved, which by definition does not allow of degrees. In this poem, too, it has been introduced as a figure for the equal glory of supreme royal status enjoyed by all (481ff). The girl is not therefore here claiming to enjoy a greater reward than can be won by other souls in heaven, but to enjoy, in common with others, a greater reward there than any human endeavour could ever claim in strict justice (579–80).
- 581ff The ‘eleventh hour’ entrants were usually interpreted as late converts (or late penitents), whose worldly ‘service’ of the Lord began late in life. But since the point lies in the comparatively short duration of the ‘labour’, the present application to those who died in infancy (and thus also entered the vineyard near the end of their life or ‘day’) is not illogical (and not unprecedented: see Vantuono).
- 585–8 The **other** are adults who – unlike the baptized innocent who dies with no sins to atone for, and therefore goes at once to heaven (625–36) – have inevitably failed in some way and must normally spend some preliminary time in Purgatory; though they lived and ‘laboured’ longer than the girl did, some are still waiting (587–8) for their ‘penny’ of heavenly bliss.
- 591 Cf. *Prope est justus meus ... et justitia mea non deficiet* [**My righteousness is near ... and my righteousness shall not be abolished**] (Isaiah 51:5–6). **rert** is glossed by Gordon ‘upraised’ (in the sense ‘supreme’), but there is no evidence of such a usage

in *MED*, which itself assigns it to *reren* v¹ 6(b) ('raise from sleep') and glosses 'alert, vigilant', a solution also open to various objections. But (*a*)*reren* in the sense of 'establish, institute, set up' was often used of the law of God, and this usage seems more relevant to the present context, in which case **evermore rert** [established in perpetuity] would echo a proposition found in many other verses of the Bible besides that quoted from Isaiah (e.g. Psalms 110:3, 8, 116:2).

- 593 **verce** referred specifically to a section 'of a psalm or canticle corresponding to the compound unit (usually a couplet) of Hebrew poetry' (*OED* sv *verse* 4). Chapters of the Bible were not divided into what are now called 'verses' until the sixteenth century. The **verce** referred to here is Psalm 61:13/62:12: *tu reddes unicuique juxta opera sua* [**thou renderest to every man according to his work**]; cf. Psalm 27:4; but in neither case does the apostrophe of 596 occur in the Vulgate.
- 594 **determinable**: *determinen* was a verb used in legal and theological contexts to mean 'decide an issue, pass judgement, pronounce authoritatively upon' (see *MED determinen* 3 and 4). **determinable** thus means 'conclusive, putting an end to dispute'.
- 596 **pertermynable** or *pretermynable* (the scribal abbreviation being expandable, as by Gordon and Hillmann, to *-re*, as well as to *-er*) is not recorded anywhere else, but *terminen* had a sense similar to that of *determinen* (see n. to 594); **pertermynable** would thus mean 'giving an authoritative verdict'. Other suggestions, derived from other senses of *terminen*, include 'foreordaining' (Gordon) and 'infinite' (Hillmann). The legal and scholastic connotations of the vocabulary used by the father are appropriate to his stress on God's justice, and his claim to be making a 'conclusive' or 'decisive' point appears reasonable, since the psalmic text he quotes is one repeated categorically at many points in Scripture (e.g. Job 34:11, Proverbs 24:12, Matthew 16:27, Romans 2:6).
- 601–2 **Of more and lesse ... no joparde**: 'jeopardy' (< OF *jeu parti* [divided game]) was used of any situation in which the outcome hung in the balance: cf. 'lyff and deth stonde in Iupartye' (Lydgate, *Secrees* 1113); for the construction with *of* + *two nouns*, indicating similar uncertainty as between two states, cf. 'eche stood in a Iupardye Of Love and Schame' (Lydgate, *Troy Book* I.2240–41). Here in *Pearl*, the point is that 'more' and 'less' are *not* competing alternatives to be resolved one way or the other with regard to the heavenly reward (which is always and for everyone the jackpot).
- 605 **the gentyl cheftayn is no chyche**: parsimoniousness in a lord was deplored, being quite inconsistent with the *largesse*

demanding by the values of *courtaysye*. For the application of this social logic to theology, cf. ‘God is na *chynche* of his grace: for he haves ynogh therofo’ (*Yorkshire Writers*, I, 133; cf. I, 306).

609–10 A&W assume **His fraunchis is large** refers to God (‘His liberality is great’), and put a pause after **large**, interpreting **that ever dard ... rescowe** as an anticipatory definition of **hem** in 611. But syntactical and metrical units are in this poem not usually permitted to run so out of sync with one another. Though **fraunchis** often meant ‘liberality, generosity’, its root sense is the ‘free status’ that is the opposite of servitude; the word thus connoted lordship, status and possessions, and could refer specifically to rights of residence or to privileges, liberties or exemptions granted by a superior authority. ‘Make rescue’ was used in various connections, especially military ones (*MED* sv *rescous* (a) and (b), *rescoue* (a) and (b), and *rescousen*). The image here is that of a **cheftayn** (605) delivering his followers from servitude and rewarding them for their allegiance to him with free status and the ‘freedom of the (heavenly) city’, i.e. full socio-economic rights and privileges there. Much the same metaphor is used of Christ and Christians in *PP* B.19.30–41; and the language is consistent with the social terms in which the concepts of heaven and blessedness are elsewhere expressed in this poem. **dard** has not been satisfactorily explained. The only verb of which it is a possible past tense seems to be *daren*, the meanings of which ranged from ‘lie hidden, lurk’ to ‘cower, crouch in fear’. An extended sense (‘submitted to’ or ‘humbled himself’) has often been suggested, but is unparalleled (as is the construction *dare to*).

611 **hem**: ‘for the use of the plural pronoun after the indefinite singular [**His** at 609], cf. 685–7’ (Gordon).

612 The refrain alludes to a popular saying, ‘The grace of God is good enough’ (Tilley G393; cf. 2 Corinthians 12:9, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee’). This refrain diverts the focus from the justice of God’s rewards to the liberality of them, as issuing from **grace** rather than human merit: **grace** (etymologically related to *gratis* [free]) refers strictly to what is freely given, as opposed to what is owed in justice.

613 **motes ... mate**: the vocabulary is that of the competitive debate. *Mote* [moot, argue] was a verb of dispute, including legal dispute. And for **mate** [checkmate, overcome, cause to be at a loss] in the sense of ‘baffle the wits of’, cf. ‘Clerk ful of skill, That cowthe with wordes men mate and styлле [reduce to silence]’ (‘Against Death is No Defence’ B 5–6).

616 **lowere**: Vantuono retains MS *lere* and glosses ‘abode, dwelling

place' (*MED leir* n¹ (e)). But it is her status, not her dwelling, in heaven that the girl's father has objected to. Most other editors follow Gordon in emending to *fere*, explained as an aphetic form of OF *affaire* and glossed 'dignity, pomp', etc. But, though the phrase *in fere* [in company] may sometimes have acquired the sense 'in style', there is no meaning recorded in *MED* for *fere* n¹ [company] or *fere* n⁵ (< OF *affaire*) that fits the present context. Since it appears from the **peny** of 614 that the girl is still speaking in the terms of the parable, a meaning such as 'hire, wages, recompense' seems required, and is provided by **lowere** (< OF *loier/louier*, AN *loer*), which can occur with stress on the second syllable (see *MED louer*(e) n²).

- 625 innocent** [without sin]: the reference here is to a baptized child, cleansed of original sin in baptism (cf. 626–7), who has not yet reached the age (usually put around seven years old) at which sin is possible ('children of this age be clepid innocentis, for thei lak use of resoun for to discerne vice fro vertu': Capgrave, *St Augustine* 7). The word is thus a semi-technical term from the register of theology – and marks the key-change (from emotional to intellectual) that has taken place: the domestic and personal identification of the girl as the mourner's 'lost pearl' (241ff) is superseded by identification of her theological status, through a dialectical process in which it is the mourner's mind, rather than his personal grief, that resists the answers given him (contrast 325ff with 481ff).
- 626 by line**: most editors follow Gordon in glossing 'successively, one after the other'; but the present line forms the only illustration of such a sense in *MED*. Scots *in a line* (= directly) (*DOST* line 6c) and ME idioms such as *even as line*, *right as line*, which similarly denote prompt procedure to a certain place (*MED* sv *line* n¹ 8(b)), suggest a meaning here of 'directly, straight away' (cf. **As sone as**). It was important that infants be baptized as soon as possible after birth, since, if they died in infancy (as many did), they could not, if unbaptized, enter heaven.
- 629–30 the day ... The night of deth dos to enclyne**: the expression is not recorded elsewhere in ME, but cf. *inclinata est jam dies* [**the day is far spent**] (Luke 24:29) and 'li solaus dut cliner' (*Ami et Amile* 579). **the day, with derk endent** involves an unparalleled metaphorical use of *endenten*. The basic meaning of this verb (from French *dent* [tooth]) was 'to serrate, to notch'. But the past participle was also used to mean 'studded' (e.g. with jewels) or 'braced' (e.g. with steel), and *indenting* could be used to translate Latin *commisura* [mingling, joint, seam]; that is, the word could be used to express the idea of something hooking firmly or

protruding into something else to form a joining. 'The day encroached (from *croc* [hook]) upon by darkness' conveys the idea intended, though it over-naturalizes an unusual figurative usage – whether the metaphor is that one or one that pictures the day as 'studded' or 'inlaid' with darkness (as assumed by Gordon and A&W).

- 647–56 The reference is to the blood and water which issued from Christ's side at the crucifixion: as explained in 651–6, the blood paid (on man's behalf) the penalty of original sin, the guilt of which was cleansed by the water, commonly held to be the origin of the sacrament of baptism.
- 651–2 The lines refer not only to the fate of damnation from which succeeding generations of mankind were freed, but also to the actual rescue by Christ, from their 'prison' of Hell, of the Old Testament faithful at the Harrowing of Hell (recounted in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus).
- 654 The spear thrust by a soldier into Christ's side (to ensure His death) occurs in the canonical Gospels (John 19:33–4), but the story in its best-known form derived from the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus. The phrasing shows the poet's familiarity with alliterative verse: cf. *P3A* 202 ('grym grownden glaive'), *MA* 3761.
- 659 The line is usually glossed 'And that (i.e. **blisse**: 658) is restored (to us) in a happy hour'. But 658–9 summarize the redemptive effects of, respectively, the blood and the water (with which the rest of the stanza is concerned) in removing the original sin that once stood 'between' man and heaven; it is thus more likely that the two instances of **that** in 658 and 659 are parallel relatives ('that which'), and that **restored** means 'made amends for, rectified' (see *OED* *restore* v 2). The next stanza certainly assumes that what is established at this point is specifically the sinless state (rather than the bliss that follows it) which is 'restored' through baptism.
- 661–4 The girl here moves from the sacrament of baptism, which mediates **grace** for original sin, to the sacrament of penance, which mediates **grace** for subsequent actual sins; 663–4 refer to contrition, confession and satisfaction (**payne** [penance, penalty]: 664), which were the constituent elements of shrift.
- 663 **sorw and syt**: the phrase is of Norse origin and occurs only in more northerly texts; cf. *Ormulum* 4852 and 7967, where it is also used of contrition: 'To betenn thine sinnes, With serrwhe and sit, wiþþ bitter wop'.
- 669 **gylytf**: the adjective appears elsewhere in the MS as *gulty*. The more formal and learned form with French-derived suffix *-yf*

(which was less common and seems to have had more specifically legal connotations) is consistent with the jurisprudential logic of the stanza and with the judicial associations of **resoun** and **right** (both commonly used of ‘justice’), **dome** [ruling, sentence], **gyltles** and **innocent** (665–8).

- 671 For the image from directional deviation, cf. 488, 665. The same metaphorical application of the verb *glenten* [sheer away, turn aside] occurs in *StE*: ‘Non gete me fro the hegh gate to glent out of ryght’ (241).
- 672 **innocence**: the penultimate letter of the word in the MS could be *c* or *t*, which are hard to distinguish in scripts of this period. It looks to us a little more like a *c*. The word has normally been transcribed *inoscente*, **right** being then interpreted as past participle of the verb *righten* (in its sense of ‘justify’ or ‘give justice to’), and **At** emended to *And* or *As*, thus giving ‘And/As innocent, is saved and vindicated’. We have interpreted the MS reading as the noun rather than the adjective (which never otherwise appears with final *-e*); **right** also as a noun, ‘justice’ (which the logic of the stanza seems to require, as a contrast with **mercy** at 670); and **At** as governing both those nouns in its attested meaning of ‘by the agency of, by means of, through’ (*MED* at *prep* 9). This is consonant with the logic of the stanza, which contrasts the longer-serving adults, who are inevitably occasionally **gyltyf** of sins, and whose salvation is therefore through **grace** and **mercy** alone (661, 669–70), with the shorter-serving **innocent** (666), who, **gyltles** (668) of sins, can claim exemption from the penalty of damnation (672) through his innocence *and* thus through justice itself (**resoun** and **right**: 665, 672).
- 675 **see His face**: based on a biblical idiom (used e.g. at Rev. 22:4); to be in heaven was to see God face to face (cf. *C* 1810, *Pa* 24).
- 677–88 The passage quoted is from Psalm 23/24:3–4: *Quis ascendet in montem Domini? aut quis stabit in loco sancto ejus? Innocens manibus et mundo corde, qui non accepit in vano animam suam, nec juravit in dolo proximo suo* [**Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully**]. A very similar passage occurs in Psalm 14/15, and line 679 seems to have been influenced by the wording of the first verse of that Psalm (*aut quis requiescet in monte sancto tuo?*), the equivalent of which in Psalm 23/24 (*aut quis stabit ...*) has influenced the additional line given to the ‘answer’ (**There schal his stepe stable stille**: 683), to make it pick up more exactly the question, with perhaps a reminiscence

of the ending of Psalm 14/15 (*non movebitur in aeternum*), **stille** ('without movement' and/or 'for ever') reinforcing the temporal and spatial stability implied by the line. The poet is probably quoting from memory; both passages were well known, and separately or in conflation formed a *locus classicus* for the definition of those who would be saved: i.e. the guilt-free righteous (cf. *PP* B.3.230–45, *StE* 274–8). But these dicta are here adapted carefully and selectively to a context in which, by stricter definition of terms, the qualities of righteousness and innocence have become virtually mutually exclusive rather than more or less synonymous: the **ryghtwys man** (675) is the righteous adult, who can never be entirely sinless, and the **harmles hathel** (676) is the sin-free innocent who, lacking the faculty of moral choice, cannot be righteous for the same reason that s/he cannot be sinful. Psalm 23/24:4 is thus divided into two halves to refer to these separate categories of the saved, the first half of it (translated at 681–2) applied to the innocent, the second half (translated at 687–8) to the 'righteous' man. The two are further divided by being assigned to separate stanzas.

- 680 Himself to answare:** that the question is a rhetorical one in the Psalter (commonly assumed to have been composed in its entirety by King David), and is immediately followed by its answer, is also noted in *PP*: 'And David assoileth it himself, as the Sauter telleth' (B.3.237). The answer, translated in 681–2, is *Innocens manibus et mundo corde* [**He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart**] (Psalm 23/24:4).
- 681 Hondelynges harme:** an inventive alliterative rendering (of *Innocens manibus*), derived from the OE adverb *handlinga* [with the hands] – which is recorded elsewhere in ME only in *Cursor* 3933, where it has the different, etymological sense of 'hand-to-hand', as applied to conflict.
- 687 That takes not her lif in vayn** occurs also as a translation of *qui non accepit in vano animam suam* (Psalm 23:4) in the Wycliffite Bible, where, however, 'soul' is used in place of **lif** (on which see n. to 305). The literalness of the renderings makes it difficult to determine exactly how the Latin was understood – and whether or not there is any relation with the idiom *take in vain* ('treat with contempt, disregard': *OED* sv *vain adj* 6), which would suggest an abuse of the *anima* consistent with the explanation of the Vulgate wording given in the *Glossa Ordinaria*: 'Id est, qui non deputavit animam rebus non permanentibus, sed eam sentiens immortalem aeterna desiderabit' [that is, who has not dedicated his soul to things that do not last, but, feeling it to be immortal, desires eternal things] (*PL* 113, col. 876).

- 690 MS *How kyntly oure con aquyle*. The line, which makes no sense without emendation, needs to introduce the mentor of the righteous man, referred to in 691–4. In the chapter from *Wisdom* (commonly attributed to Solomon) which those lines paraphrase (*Wisdom* 10:10), that figure is *Sapientia* [Wisdom], represented as always guiding the just man along the right ways and keeping him physically and morally ‘safe’ amid the dangers and depravity besetting him. Perhaps the scribe was thrown by an uncommon French loan word – such as that speculatively supplied here. Other suggested emendations include ‘How Koynitise [Wisdom] onoure [honour] con aquyle’ (Bradley 1890, followed by Gordon) and ‘Hym Koynitise oure (‘our Wisdom’ = God) con aquyle’ (A&W).
- 691–2 *Haec ... justum deduxit per vias rectas, et ostendit illi regnum Dei* [**wisdom guided him in straight paths; she shewed him God’s kingdom**] (*Wisdom* 10:10).
- 693–6 The passage from *Wisdom* has been extended (693–4) to give the just man encouragement to effort and perseverance, rather than assurance of success, in order to contrast the conditional nature of his salvation (**if**: 694) with the guarantee of such safety (**hardily, without peril**: 695) assured to the innocent by **right** [justice: 696].
- 699–700 *Domine ... non intres in iudicium cum servo tuo, quia non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens* [**Lord ... enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified**] (Psalm 142/143:1–2).
- 703–4 The point is that, since no man’s justness can bear the scrutiny of absolute justice (699–700), no man can claim salvation as his just desert. The reference in 701–7 is to divine judgement, passed at death on each soul, as well as in general and in public at Judgement Day. The analogy with secular justice in courts of law (cf. 701–2) was not uncommon, and in *PP* also leads to advice to the defendant about the best grounds on which to plead his case (B.7.188–201).
- 703 **Alegge** is a legal term (‘make a formal declaration in court ... in support of a right or in justification of a claim’: *MED* *allegen* v¹ 1), and **innome**, in the context of legal debate, meant something like ‘(dialectically) trapped, confuted’; cf. ‘Artu yut inume? / Artu mid righte overcume?’ (*Owl and Nightingale* 541–2; see Everett and Hurnard 1947).
- 707 **passe**, in the context of the theological court trial introduced at 701, means ‘escape or avoid punishment (i.e. of damnation) or pain’ (cf. *MED* *passen* 13(f)), as at *Cursor C* 28706–7: ‘For quen a [one] sin was wroken [punished] sua, Hu sal he passe has

hundert ma?’

- 708 **innocence**: i.e. the sinlessness achieved through the grace of forgiveness, conferred in confession and absolution (661–4), and made available through the redemption and atonement of the crucifixion (705–6). This is the only way an adult can achieve the **innocence** that is crucial in the theology of salvation.
- 710–24 The biblical passage referred to is Luke 18:15–17 (corresponding to Matthew 19:13–15, Mark 10:13–16).
- 712 **brayde** is the equivalent of *afferebant* (Luke 18:15), *oblatis sunt* (Matthew 19:13), *offerebant* (Mark 10:13), and so means ‘presented’; the verb is similarly used in the sense ‘proffer’ at G 2377 (‘Brayde brothely the belt to the burne selven’). *MED* unconvincingly assigns the two instances to different and doubtful senses of *breiden* v¹, *Pe* 712 forming the single instance of *breide unto* as ‘lead, bring’ under 3(b), and G 2377 glossed under 7 as ‘fling or hurl’.
- 718–19 *Suffer little children [pueros] to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God* (Luke 18:16). For **arrayed** in the sense of ‘appointed’ or ‘destined’, cf. *Troilus* 2.200 and ‘He hath skapide the deth to hym arrayed [Latin *sibi paratam*]’ in *Book of the Foundation of St Bartholomew’s* 15.
- 721–4 The stanza is more elaborately (if less obviously) concatenated with the previous one than usual: the first four lines repeat the sense and key words of the last four of the preceding section: **Jesus** (717, 721), **-ryche** (719, 722), **childer/childe** (718, 723). The deviation from the norm signals a pronounced modulation in the poem, as most of its essential topics – in this verse, ‘child’, ‘pearl’, ‘spotlessness’ – are reconfigured to express wider and more general (and less personal and emotional) truths. Given the number symbolism operative in the poem (see p. 6) the point at which this shift in application occurs (at the end of twelve sections) may well be significant. The lines render Luke 18:16–17: *But Jesus called [the children] unto him, and said ... Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child [sicut puer] shall in no wise enter therein.*
- 726, 732 The alliterative collocation **mote or mascle** occurs also at 843 and at C 556, but is unusual, *mascle* (derived through French from a variant of Latin *macula*) being a comparatively rare and learned word for ‘spot’. The suffixed form with *-les* is unique to this poem, in which the **mascelles** pearl of salvation (732) is lexically associated with the childlike soul **Withoute ... mascle** (726) to which alone it is accessible; the refrain of the opening section, **withouten spot**, thus here reappears in a more sophisticated form, **mascelles**, consistent with the more

sophisticated and theological application of it.

728 **the yate unpynne**: cf. 'Conscience ... made Pees porter to pynne the yates' (*PP* B.20.298–9; cf. 331).

730–32 **Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price** [*Inventa ... una pretiosa margarita*], **went and sold all that he had, and bought it** (Matthew 13:45–6). The girl had herself (241–336) formerly figured as the 'spotless pearl' which the dreamer, cast as a **jueler**, had been anxious to **porchase** [obtain: 744]; but here and at 733–5 she points beyond herself to a larger quest for perfection latent in the metaphor.

733 Concatenation is in this section used to associate two words similar in sense and sound, **makeles** [matchless, peerless], in stanza-initial position at 733 and 757, concatenating with **mascelles** [spotless, immaculate] in refrain position. The pearl of the opening stanza, without peer and without spot, thus reappears, although the attributes are now those of heavenly bliss.

738 **endeles rounde**: the shape of the pearl, like that of the **endeles** pentangle-knot in *Sir Gawain* (629–30, 660–61), is associated with the circular form of both texts (in which the opening and final lines mirror one another), and with the 'perfection' for which in both texts the two images provide a geometrical focus: the infinite and **mascelles** perfection of the sphere of heaven, and the **fautles** integrity (*G* 640) of the perfect knight.

740 The reintroduction (here and at 748–67) of the costume described in section IV (now endued with spiritual symbolism) and of the iconic Lamb (an image not used since 413) enhances the impression given of textual elements reassembling themselves in this section to express larger significance.

745 Cf. 769, 780. Whereas the girl applies the concatenating words **mascelles** and **makeles** to the deity and His realm, her father applies them to the daughter who is still the focus of his more mortal, and therefore more personal, orientation; there is a similar distinction in the use of the concatenating word **deme** in section VI.

749–54 Aristotle and Pygmalion occur as types of the philosopher and artist who cannot vie with nature at *Roman de la rose* 16174–81 (a dream-vision mentioned by this poet in *C* 1057–64), and Pygmalion (who created a statue so lifelike and beautiful that he fell in love with it) also figures elsewhere as the typical artificer whose work is similarly proved, by the beauty of a given lady, unable to compete with that of nature: see *CT* VI.14. The more extravagant claim, that even nature seemed surpassed by a

beauty so superlative as to suggest **angel** rather than mortal origins (cf. *Troilus* I.100–105), was likewise a commonplace in the eulogy of feminine pulchritude, but it is here applied to a **beaute** which is truly supramortal and divine.

755 **offys**: though previously read as *oftriys* or *ostriys* and variously emended, the word in the MS has since been confirmed as *offys* (Vantuono). Since the question which the father is asking in this stanza – and which the girl answers in the following one – is how and by whom she acquired her present visible form and beauty, the sense seems to be ‘state of being, life-form’ (an extension of such meanings as ‘functioning’, ‘operation’: see *MED office* 3 and 4), rather than ‘status’ or ‘position’ (which the father has already been informed of).

757–60 There is some wordplay involved in the **makeles** [‘mateless’, matchless] Lamb taking as His **make** [mate, consort] a being so insignificant in secular terms as to have rendered the marriage an unsuitably unequal one (759–60). Christ was able, by turning her into a lady of status and beauty (765), to remedy this disparity, since He was a being **that all may bete** [who can remedy all things: 757], a phrase that alludes to the crucifixion (often referred to as the *boot* [remedy] of *bale*).

761 **your worlde wete**: the plural **your** [of you mortals] has here the distancing effect it has elsewhere (cf. 305–6, 497), placing the father in a different category of being – and in a different ‘world’, detachedly characterized (cf. **worlde wod** at 743) as **wete** (i.e. with a climate that marks the dismalness and mutability absent from heaven).

763–4 **Thou art all fair, my love** [*amica mea*]; **there is no spot** [*macula*] **in thee. Come ... my spouse** (Song of Solomon 4:7–8; cf. *immaculata mea* at 5:2). This and other passages from the Song of Songs – a love song featuring a groom and bride (*sponsus* and *sponsa*) – were often quoted in contexts of both religious and secular love (cf. *CT* IV.2137–48). The Song was regarded by exegetes as expressing, at the allegorical level, God’s love for the Church and/or the individual soul. The text here combines the literal and spiritual interpretations (since it is uttered by Christ, but precisely as *sponsus*). The ‘spotlessness’ referred to confers scriptural confirmation upon an attribute of the pearl that has been repeatedly adduced.

766 Rev. 7:14 refers to the blessed who *laverunt stolas suas in sanguine Agni* [**have washed their robes ... in the blood of the Lamb**]. It is in this stanza that the Book of Revelation (a vision) begins to impose its own defining logic (together with its defining images of the Lamb, His followers and the New Jerusalem) on this

dream-vision.

- 775 **a comly anunder cambe**: an alliterative periphrasis for ‘woman’, coined according to a common pattern; cf. such expressions as *lufsum under lyne* [linen], *lively under lace* and *comly under kelle* [caul]; see Oakden 1935: 321, 331.
- 781–4 The cool correction recalls the girl’s first speeches, in which she had also pointed out errors in her father’s wording (257–8; 291–2). In response to his application to her at 780 of both the concatenating words **makeles** and **mascelles**, she accepts the second (there is no point in false modesty in heaven), but points out that **makeles** [‘peer’-less] she is not: she has *makes* in the other wives of the Lamb; for wifehood, like monarchy, is a corporate, not a singular, honour in heaven, where (in her more exact language use) only the realm itself and its lord are truly **makeles** (733, 757).
- 785–9 The 144,000 of Revelation are the followers of the Lamb: ***And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand*** (Rev. 14:1). These beings are declared to be *sine macula* [without spot] and to be all virgins (14:4–5), and innocents such as the girl herself were therefore commonly assumed to be numbered among them; the murdered little boy of the Prioress’s Tale is also imagined as destined to figure in this group: ‘O martir, sowded to virginitee, Now maystow syngen, folwyng evere in oon The white Lamb celestial ... Of which the grete evaungelist, Seint John, In Pathmos wroot’ (CT VII.579–83). The representation of them in *Pearl* as brides is by conflation with another image from Revelation, that of the nuptials of the Lamb, in which the bride ***Arayed to the weddyng*** (791) is a collective figure, the elect generally or the heavenly city of Jerusalem itself ***prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*** (21:2; cf. 19:7).
- 788–90 **Saynt John ... The apostel**: the John who identifies himself in its opening chapter as the author of Revelation was assumed to be the disciple and evangelist of that name. The visions and voices recorded in Revelation are seen and heard *in spiritu* (1:10, 4:2, etc), and the Book thus became the archetype of the **gostly dreme** (790) – i.e. the dream which is in fact a spiritual vision of divine truths, a category in which this poem also ultimately places itself (1184), as a dream-vision increasingly subsumed and verified by that of John.
- 789 **clot**: often glossed ‘mound’ or ‘hill’, but that is the contextual implication rather than the meaning of the word, which elsewhere signifies ‘soil, turf, earth’; the application found here is unusual.

- 791 **hil-coppe** gives an imperfect rhyme. Emendation to *hil-mot* would provide one solution. *Mot(e)* [mound] – later used as a poeticism for city (see n. to 948) – could occur with long or short *o* in ME, as could its OF etymon *mote/motte*.
- 792 The heavenly city of the ‘New Jerusalem’, the glorified version of its earthly counterpart, is a major topic of Revelation, in which it is seen to descend from heaven (3:12, 21:10).
- 797–840 The poet here conducts quite a technical exercise in ‘concording’, or tracing an image or theme (here, that of the **Lamb**) through a number of biblical passages; cf. *Ancrene Wisse* Part 7, where images of the shield and of heat, respectively, are followed through several different biblical passages. There were handbooks (such as John Bromyard’s *Summa Praedicatorum*) available for use in such exercises, but the poet may well here be concording simply from a retentive memory of the Bible. The texts cited all serve to authorize the figure of the lamb for Christ, and, together with the concatenating refrain **Jerusalem**, introduce the two major images of Revelation, which come to form the focus and eventually (973–1152) the climax of the poem.
- 799–803 Isaiah 53 (which actually refers to the innocent who becomes a scapegoat for man’s collective guilt) was not unnaturally taken as a prophetic reference to the crucifixion (cf. CT X.280); verses 7 and 9 are the ones specifically referred to here: **he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth ... he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.**
- 802 **nem** (MS *men*): the emendation was first suggested by Morris.
- 808 **toke on Himself**: see n. to 826.
- 817–18 Jerusalem, Jordan and Galilee all lie beside the river Jordan, in which St John the Baptist first performed what became the sacrament of baptism (Mark 1:5). His activities and his baptism of Christ are recorded in all the canonical Gospels (Matthew 3, Mark 1:4–11, Luke 3:3–22, John 1:28–36).
- 822–4 **Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world** (John 1:29). **as true as stone** (822) was a proverbial expression for unfailing constancy and loyalty.
- 826 **on Himself ... clem**: **clem** seems to represent the verb ‘claim’ (AN *clemere*), though ‘claim’ is not elsewhere used of assuming liability; the usage here is presumably an emphatic variation (for the sake of rhyme) of the comparable construction with the verb *take* at 808 (where the same theological point is made), with which cf. ‘Jhesu Crist took upon hymself the peyne [penalty] of alle oure wikkednesses’ (CT X.282).

- 827 **and who shall declare his generation** (Isaiah 53:8) follows immediately on the passage which is quoted from Isaiah in the previous stanza and which, in the present stanza, is specifically ‘concorded’ (819) with that from the Gospels.
- 831 **ayther prophete**: i.e. Isaiah and John the Baptist, who was regularly classified as the last of the prophets.
- 835–40 The description of the Lamb breaking the seven seals of what is identified (at Rev. 21:27) as the Book of Life occurs in Rev. 5 and 6: *And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book ... sealed with seven seals ... And one of the elders saith unto me ... behold ... the Root of David hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne ... and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain ... And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne ... And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing ... unto the Lamb for ever and ever ... And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him* (5:1, 5–7, 13–14). The passage forms the third and final of the scriptural authorities cited by the girl for the image of Christ as a lamb, and it is through this apocalyptic image that He is consistently referred to henceforward. This ensures that God and heaven continue to be felt as something beyond human comprehension: Christ, even when directly beheld by the dreamer (1110–46), remains removed and estranged by the figure of the Lamb, an emblem rather than a metaphor, a visual image which actually discourages visualization – a feature of Apocalyptic imagery particularly noticeable in this stanza (a lamb standing in the middle of a throne and breaking the seals of a book or scroll is a scene which cannot be pictured with any precision).
- 841–6 One of the poetic functions served by the apocalyptic image of the Lamb is to suggest a ‘compatible’ mate for the girl (cf. **worthly wyf** at 846), and to transfer the focus from her to the God to whom she has been joined, by attributing to Him qualities closely associated with her: the preciousness of a ‘jewel’ (795), and, here, whiteness, spotlessness (with 843 cf. 726) and even the innocence of youth.
- 841 **peche**: sometimes assumed to represent OF *peche* [sin, stain] (Gordon, A&W) or ME *patch* (Emerson 1922), but the former is not otherwise recorded in ME and makes imperfect sense in the context of the following line, while the latter is not attested in this spelling. The noun more probably represents *piece* (in the

sense ‘part, patch’), also spelled *pec(c)he* in ME (< OF *p(i)ece* but also *p(i)eche*): see *MED* sv *pece*.

- 850 **The mo, the merier**: the earliest occurrence of this expression, and in fact the only one in ME, unless one counts a looser and probably chance instance in Margery Kempe: ‘the mor schame I suffyr and despite, the meryar may I ben in owr Lord Ihesu Crist’ (135).
- 857–9 Two common collocations – dense in associations with, respectively, mortality (**clottes** and **clynge**) and lamentation (**remen** and **routhe**) – serve dismissively to distinguish the mortal world from the ‘mirth’ and ‘gladness’ (860–64) of eternity.
- 860 **on deth**: often assumed to refer to Christ’s death, the basis of mortal **hope** of eternal life. But the girl seems here to be dealing rather with the contrast between mortal sorrow and biological death and immortal bliss, in which the saved are liberated by that **on deth** to full security from the more final ‘second’ death (652), i.e. eternal perdition (Hillmann).
- 862 The joy and dignity of heavenly life are again expressed through the social values of *courtaysye*: the reference is to the mystical feast of heaven sacramentally betokened at **messe** [Mass] by the Eucharist (cf. 1064), but the image is that of a secular lord honouring his household at a public feast, with which the terms **mirth** and **messe** [course or portion of food; feast] are typically associated: cf. *G* 45, 1004, 1007.
- 863–4 This repeats the paradox of monarchical supremacy to which no one is inferior (cf. 445ff): each is **best**, but none is **lesse**; for the corporate nature of heavenly life allows only the superlative, not the comparative, degree.
- 865 **les**: sometimes interpreted as ‘less’, but *les* = ‘false, fictive’ (cf. *C* 1719, *Pa* 428) more logically introduces the verification that follows (866) by the irrefutable authority of Scripture.
- 866–76 **wro** [corner, nook] does not occur elsewhere in the transferred sense required here. The **wro** or ‘passage’ of Revelation at issue (referred to more summarily at 787–9) is 14:1–2: *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder.*
- 868 **thryven and thro**: in this established alliterative collocation (cf. *Harley Lyrics* 9/16) the adjectives gained a more general sense (‘fine, impressive’) than that in which they were normally used (i.e. ‘fully formed; having thrived’ and ‘vigorous; fierce’) – though the connotations of full and vibrant life remain relevant here.

- 874 **laden**: the footgloss follows the interpretation of the line that is generally given but which is somewhat suspect (as is the line itself, metrically overheavy). **laden** does not occur elsewhere as a spelling for *leden* [language, tongue, voice], for which the form at 878 is **ledde**.
- 875 Cf. C 951, where clouds are said to form themselves into **torres** which are then split by thunder. Breeze (1996) documents applications of the word ‘tower’ to stormy and densely piled-up cloud-masses in various romance languages, but **torres** may well be a plural of *tor* [hill, peak], since (except at *Pe* 966, where it occurs in a series of rhymes spelled *-or* in the MS) *tower* is elsewhere in the MS always spelled *tour(e)* or *towre*.
- 877–80 These lines have no equivalent in Revelation, and provide a transition from the volume to the melody of the song, which seems only gradually to emerge from its terrific resonance.
- 881–8 ... **and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders** (Rev. 14:2–3). The four beasts and the twenty-four elders were well-known details from Revelation, which mentions them several times as worshippers of the Lamb.
- 889–900 ... **and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth** [*qui empti sunt de terra*]. **These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb** [*Hi empti sunt ex hominibus primitiae Deo, et Agno*]. **And in their mouth was found no guile** [*mendacium*]: **for they are without fault** [*sine macula*] **before the throne of God** (Rev. 14:3–5). Given his central theme of ‘spotlessness’, and the superstitious veneration of virginity characteristic of the period, it is remarkable that this poet makes so little of the subject (cf. n. to C 693–712); virginity gains only one passing mention (767), and is here omitted as the defining feature of the ‘immaculateness’ of the 144,000; the poem concerns itself with a much larger and more abstract kind of perfection.
- 894 The image is that of the ‘first fruits’ of the new harvest – offered to God at Lammas, the season in which the poem is set (see 39–40 and n. to 39), and the associations of which here gain a significance far beyond that first suggested by a season when ‘corne is corven with crokes kene’ (40).
- 895–6 **anjoynt**: ‘enjoin’ could mean simply ‘unite’ or specifically ‘unite in marriage’; the two lines, unparalleled in the Vulgate,

thus conflate the scriptural association between the Lamb and His **meyny** (892) (who, though commonly assumed by exegetes to include females, are actually referred to in the masculine plural in the Vulgate) with the closer association of marriage, justifying that association as a union of compatibles. **lote** and **hue** could also have specific and less specific meanings, and here convey a broader sense (**lote** = behaviour, **hue** = form) focused through the narrower ones of **hue** = ‘colour’ (i.e. whiteness) and **lote** = ‘sound/speech’ (i.e. tongues free from **lesyng** and **tale untrue**: 897).

- 903 **tempte**: here used in a sense (‘subject presumptuously to verification, require proof’) that occurs elsewhere only in connection with divine beings (God and Christ), whose truth it is hubristic sin to cross-question or test. The father emphasizes that it is his own mortal limitations (905, 911) that prompt his request for clarification, not any doubts as to the veracity (903, 909) of what his daughter has told him.
- 904 **chamber** could refer to that department of a household which was devoted to its lord’s private quarters and affairs; employment or attendance in this *chamber* testified to a servant’s enjoyment of his master’s good will and confidence (cf. CT I.1437–41). The word could also be used of a bridal chamber. It is thus compatible with both the social relationships used to convey the corporate life in heaven, where the **meyny** gains its identity from the **mayster** (899–900), and the bride from her lord (cf. nn. to 403 and 895–6). The girl’s consistent reference to the Lamb as her **lord** (407, 413, 741, 795) also conflates the relationships of servant and wife.
- 905 **amonk** (MS *among*): the rhyme indicates that the word needs to be pronounced with the unvoicing of final consonants characteristic of western dialects (cf. **flonc** for *flong* in rhyme at 1165). **mul** [dust, ashes] is often used to indicate the humble inferiority of the mortal condition by contrast with the immortal (cf. C 736); the collocation with **mokke** occurs also in ‘Death, the Soul’s Friend’ 45. The father here expands this image into a larger horticultural contrast, in which he stands to his beatified daughter as **mokke** and **mul** to a **reken rose** (906).
- 911 **blose**: found only here, and variously emended and interpreted. Emendation to *bose* [boss] – suggested by Gordon and taken up by A&W – is unsatisfactory: the sense ‘lump of a man’ (*MED boce* 3(d)) has only doubtful (and later) attestation, and – being not merely derogatory, but belonging to the register of colloquial abuse – would be stylistically out of key here. Gordon, followed by *MED*, tentatively associated *blose* with French *blos* (related to

German *blos*), meaning ‘bare, empty’, and glossed ‘(?)rough uncouth person’, which is obviously the general sense.

- 915–16 The granting of a **bone** [boon] is a feature of courtly ethics (see e.g. Malory 99, 112, 294), and it is by her own perfection (915) that the dreamer here conjures his daughter to grant him his.
- 929 On jewels as a regularly used metaphor for women, see n. to [line 1](#).
- 930 For **lye thereoute** in the sense of ‘lodge or spend the night in the open’, cf. *CT* VII.2172 and *Twenty-Six Political and Other Poems* 6/38 (and cf. *G* 2481).
- 931 **gele**: apparently from OE *gaelan* [delay, hesitate], but this is the only recorded instance of the survival of the word into ME.
- 943–4 ... **new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God ... And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven** (Rev. 3:12, 21:2).
- 947 **flake**: not recorded elsewhere in the sense of ‘flaw’ required here – a word to which it is related, though neither appears in *MED* in any sense other than ‘flake’. *OED* compares *fleck* = ‘spot’.
- 948 **mote** [castle, keep, fortress] is used of a city only in this poem and in *Patience* (422). The poet is plainly picturing a city that is, in physical and social structure, an enlarged court: it centres on a castle and a court, surrounded by a wall (917), and on a lord who defines its identity and loyalties, and on whom its livelihood depends. The terms ‘manor’ and ‘bailey’ (1029, 1083) are also extrapolations from the realm of castle courts, which provide the model for an ideally happy, civilized and united community.
- 951 **nis ... no more to mene**: *is to mene* was a common idiom equivalent to ‘means’. The usually passive sense of the infinitive when preceded by *is to* indicates that the idiom was probably understood as ‘is to be interpreted’; cf. the translation of *quod interpretatur* at Judges 15:17 (which also concerns the explication of a name) in the earlier version of the Wycliffite Bible: ‘He clepide the name of that place Ramathlei, that is to meenyn, the hevyng up of the chekebon.’
- 952–60 Of the two etymologies for Jerusalem, the first is based on the biblical *civitas Dei* (applied to the New Jerusalem at Hebrews 12:22 and Rev. 3:12), while the second, found in Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologies* (VIII.1.6), was popularized by the seventh-century hymn *Urbs beata Hierusalem, dicta pacis visio* [the blessed city of Jerusalem, designated the vision of peace] – cf. Hilton II.xxi: ‘Jerusalem is as mykel for to say as sight of pees.’ Both etymologies are seen as applicable to both Jerusalems, the second being explicitly explained as applying to the earthly Jerusalem as

the site in which, through the crucifixion, **pese** (man's reconciliation with God) was made (953), and to the heavenly Jerusalem as the place where the fruits of that act are enjoyed, where **pese** is 'gleaned' (955) – a verb which strictly referred to the gathering of corn-heads after the reaping. The transformation from and through mortality and death to glory and increase is repeated in 958–9, in which Christ's followers **rote** [rot] only to enjoy an 'increasing' harvest from their deaths.

- 961 The decorated initial that elsewhere in the text always marks the beginning of a new section is found also here. It is the only error in the visual guides to the structure of the poem which these initials provide.
- 963 **bygly** (derived from an ON adjective meaning 'habitable') occurs in ME applied only to habitations (**bylde** here, 'bower', 'house' elsewhere) and to 'bliss'.
- 967 **aquylde** (< OF *acueillir* [pursue, obtain]) occurs in ME only in this poem (here and at 690); cf. *enquylen* (*Pa* 39 and n.).
- 968 The **sight** of the New Jerusalem the dreamer is to be permitted correlates interestingly with the **sight of pese** (952) given as an etymological explanation of the name, and marks the last change of mode in the dream, as it moves back from dialogue to visual description (description now based on that given in Revelation).
- 973 **unhyde**: an exact translation of Greek *apocalypse* (*apo* [from] + *kalyptein* [to cover or hide]), the term translated by 'Revelation'; the poem does not merely follow Revelation for the details of the city's construction, but suggests a re-enactment of that vision in a private and personal dream-apocalypse whose arche-type is the **gostly dreme** (790) of St John.
- 980 **blusched** occurs chiefly in alliterative verse as a synonym for 'looked' (for the collocation with **burgh**, see *DT* 8242 and *C* 982); it is selected by this poet at critical and dramatic moments (cf. especially *Pa* 474 and *G* 793).
- 982 ***Having the glory [claritatem] of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal*** (Rev. 21:11). The intense bejewelled glitter of the city is a further feature of this second object seen beyond the river that links it with the first (the girl herself: cf. e.g. 165–6).
- 983–8 These lines indicate the closeness with which the ensuing description of the New Jerusalem follows that given in Revelation, which acts to authorize the veracity of what is here related. The city is seen as if 'set down' (**keved**, 981) on the very hill (979, 988) from which St John saw it descend from heaven in Rev. 21:10: ***And he*** (an angel) ***carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the***

holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. The construction **As John ...** (so) **I** (used at 985–6 and at the beginning of the next stanza and at 1021) presents the two visions, St John's and the poet's, as mutually confirmatory.

989–90 ... *and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass* (Rev. 21:18).

991–6 *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations ... And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished [ornata] with all manner of precious stones* (Rev. 21:14, 19). The figure twelve – on which the dimensions of the New Jerusalem are based (as are the 144,000 followers of the Lamb) in Revelation – receives emphasis in the poem (992, 993), which has taken it as a number mystically symbolic of divine perfection and adopted it as the numerical principle of its own twelve-line stanzas and 1212 lines. The twelve-tiered foundation steps of precious stones are visualized in precise and concrete terms, the vocabulary being technical (**bantels**, **basyng**, **fundementes**, **tenoun**, **tabelment**) – very much so in the case of **bantels** (992), a word of uncertain derivation, which occurs only here and at C 1459, and whose meaning has therefore to be inferred from these two attestations: 'projecting tiers of masonry (here at the base, in *Cleanness* at the top) of an architectural structure or model thereof' is the gloss which suggests itself; see also Gordon and Onions 1933 and n. to C 1458–63.

999–1004 The jewels mentioned here are not always quite identical with those indicated by the same name today. Jasper is typically green in other medieval texts: cf. Trevisa, *Properties* II, 853; *Court of Sapience* 1006 ('The jaspre grene of syght'). On the translucent paleness of chalcedony, cf. Trevisa II, 840; Capgrave, *Life of St Katharine* III, 1285–7 ('a stoon / ... is cleped a Calcedony ... liche a cloude of reyn / ... swiche his colour is').

999–1007 **gemme**, **hemme**, **wemme** repeats rhymes found at 217, 219, 221; and **con wale** recurs at 1000 and 1007 to result in a rare instance of self-rhyme; a list of jewels, much though the poet may have enjoyed it, is probably no great prompter of inspiration.

1007 **ruby** (MS *rybe*): Greek *sardion* is in the Vulgate translated *sardius*, which, though a red stone, was not usually identified with the ruby. But Gordon points out that it is clear from 1041 that the poet was collating the description of Jerusalem in Revelation with a passage traditionally associated with it, the account of Aaron's ephod and breastplate in Exodus 28 – in which *sardius* is used to translate Hebrew *odem* (28:17), and this stone was understood by several early commentators to be a ruby

– an interpretation which may well have led the poet to give a similar translation for *sardius* here.

- 1011 clere and white:** ‘clear’ and ‘bright’ are the epithets typically applied to the beryl at this period (cf. 110, C 554, 1132), attributes confirmed by the fact that the name was used of a particular type of crystal (see editor’s n. to Chaucer’s *House of Fame* 1184).
- 1012 topace twynne-hue:** Gollancz cites Bede’s *Explanatio Apocalypsis*: ‘Topazius ... duos habere fertur colores, unum auri purissimi, et alterum aetherea claritate relucensem’ (PL 93, 200). The topaz is similarly credited with ‘tweye colours as it were of gold and of cleere ayer’ by Trevisa (*Properties* II, 877), in medieval lapidaries (*Lapidaire de Modène* 414), and in the gloss to Rev. 21:20 (the poet’s source for the present line) in *Glossa Ordinaria*.
- 1013 tyt:** Gordon and Onions 1933 argue that MS *ty3t*, given the words with which it here rhymes, probably represents the past participle ‘tied’. (Unvoicing of final *d* to *t* was a characteristic of western dialects.) For the application of the word to tiers or steps (cf. 1022), cf. ‘Ther stont a trone ... Sevene steppes ther beoth therto, That so feire with ordre itiyed [var. *ijoyned*] beoth’ (*Castle of Love* 736–40).
- 1015 the gentylest in uch a plyt:** most lapidaries say only that the amethyst is good against drunkenness, but some attributed to it a wide range of healing and protecting powers (*Lapidaire de Berne* 1013–28, *Anglo-Norman Lapidaries* 380): these probably represent ‘the tradition on which the present line is based’ (Gordon).
- 1017–18** See nn. to 982 and 989–90. The comparison with glass occurs twice both in the poem (990, 1018) and in the passage from Revelation (21:11, 18) it is following.
- 1023–5** *And the city lieth foursquare ... The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal ... and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass* [*vitrum perlucidum*] (Rev. 21:16, 21).
- 1026–8** These lines are an expansion consistent with both dream-texts, Revelation and this poem itself. The independent variation at 1026 on the Vulgate simile with glass (reproduced at 1018 and 1025), and the unusualness of the image chosen (**glayre** does not otherwise figure in ME outside recipes for food, glue, paint, etc) prompts more precise visualization; in combination with 1025, this produces a pause on the translucent purity of overall effect which recalls the climax of the earlier descriptions of both the landscape (the glassy dazzle of the river: cf. 114) and of the bepearled girl (her breast-pearl, so ‘clene and clere and pure’:

- 1029–32 *And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city ... and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal* (Rev. 21:15–16).
- 1029 **uch sware**: *square* could be used of a tool for measuring right angles and developed a special contextual sense in which it referred to a measurable portion, line or side, of a geometrical figure: thus a triangle has three ‘squares’, a rectangle four, a hexagon six, etc (see *MED square* n 2(b) and *sqwaren* v 2(b)). Since the present city is a cube, it has three significant measurements (height, width and length), which are listed in 1031, a line that in effect spells out what **uch sware** actually means.
- 1030 **Twelve forlonge space**: the Vulgate specifies twelve thousand *stadia* [furlongs]. Since the point of the number clearly lies in a mystical significance focused through the figure twelve, it was not uncommon for the noughts to be ignored in commentaries on and versions of this part of Scripture. See Gordon’s note and the widely disseminated *Apocalypse of St Paul* (30).
- 1034–42 *And had a wall ... and had twelve gates ... and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; on the west three gates ... And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl* (Rev. 21:12–13, 21). Rev. 21:21 (translated at 1037) is the source of the expression ‘the pearly gates’.
- 1036 **pyked of**: referred to the verb ‘pick’ by Gordon and by A&W, and glossed ‘decorated with’. But no such sense is recorded for ‘pick’ (the illustrations for ‘keep neat, make trim’, etc, sv *MED piken* v¹ 5, are all related to a basic sense of ‘pick clean’). **pyked** is more likely to be an aphetic form of *apiken*, otherwise recorded only at C 1479 and 1637 (and perhaps at CT I.365), where the meaning is plainly ‘set’ in the sense of ‘set richly, array’. The **plates** reflect the same instinct to analyse in the technical terms of the artificer, as is evident in **pane**, **poursent** and **portales** (1034–6; cf. n. to 991–6): they probably represent the metal plates on which the poet assumes the names were written (see *MED plate* 1(d)).
- 1040–42 The reference is to the twelve sons of Jacob (whose name was changed by divine deed-poll to ‘Israel’: Genesis 35:10), after whom the twelve tribes of Israel were named. The chronological order of the names is a point derived, not from Revelation, but from its analogue in Exodus 28 (see n. to 1007), in which two stones on the ephod are engraved with the names of the twelve

tribes of Israel *juxta ordinem nativitatis eorum* [**according to their birth**] (Exodus 28:10).

- 1041 The second element of the compound **byrth-whates** [birth-fortunes], from OE *hwatu* [omen], occurs elsewhere (in the sense ‘luck, fortune’), but the compound is the poet’s own coinage, and concisely expresses the adventitious aspect of chronological seniority.
- 1043–4 Recapitulating Rev. 21:21 (already translated at 1025) and an anticipation of Rev. 21:23 (***And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof***), more fully translated at 1045–8, but here given a less abstract application. The triple reference in Revelation to the crystalline clarity of the city (21:11, 18, 21) is thus multiplied further by the poem, which makes a defining characteristic of it (982, 989–990, 1018, 1025, 1043), while the supersession of the planetary luminaries (Rev. 21:23, 22:5) is expanded to form the concatenating key-note of the present section – thus linking the brightness of the city with its separateness from the known *sublunary* world.
- 1046 **lambe lyght** [bright luminary]: usually printed as a compound, but ‘lamplight’ is not otherwise recorded before the late sixteenth century, and the noun would yield a self-rhyme (with the noun **lyght** at 1050, emended to *syght* by A&W), which this poet usually avoids – whereas rhyme on the adjective and noun would give *rime équivoque* (rhyme on homonyms or on the same word in different parts of speech), which was not only permissible but actually admired. **lambe** is a reverse spelling reflecting the unvoicing of consonants in this dialect (see p. xx). It obviously provides a phonic link with the **Lamb** (= Christ) of 1047, though *lombe* is how that word is spelled there (as usually elsewhere) in the MS; but the pertinence of the ‘lamp’ lies chiefly in the fact that the word was often used figuratively of the planetary luminaries (see *MED laumpe* n (b)).
- 1047 **lantyrne**: the same word is used as the equivalent of Vulgate *lucerna* in the Wycliffite Bible.
- 1049–50 The lines are independent of the Vulgate, but consistent with the poem’s emphasis on the sparkling clarity of the city (see n. to 1043–4). The climax of this vision is thus vision indeed – a consummate visual experience, in which all is literally ‘crystal clear’.
- 1051–4 The passage from Revelation the poem is following does not include at this point any vision of God upon His throne; such a sight is seen, however, at Rev. 4:1–6, which also contains the description (of **the apparaylmente**) to which the reader is

referred (1053).

1055–60 The river issuing from God's throne is almost certainly **this bornes heved** (974) towards which the dreamer had been told to proceed: i.e. it is the source of the river on whose banks he stands and which had figured as the chief glory of the jewelled landscape he had found himself in, the present lines equating with 107–20. The city now seen on the further shore also recalls the even greater beauties the dreamer had earlier glimpsed on the opposite bank (148). The description of the jewelled city is thus linked with the earlier one of the jewelled landscape, now transformed into a more sublime and scripturally verified version of itself.

1055–6 *And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal* [splendidum tanquam crystallum], *proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb* (Rev. 22:1).

1061–4 *And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it* (Rev. 21:22).

1064 **refet**: the MS reads *reget*, of which no convincing interpretation has been offered. The emendation to **refet** was first suggested by Wright 1939 and makes good sense: the 'Lamb of God' on earth nourishes the congregation in the sacrament of the Eucharist, a ritual superseded here (as is the Church itself: 1061–3) by the reality it adumbrated.

1065–8 *And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there* (Rev. 21:25). The biblical explanation of the permanently open gates is that in heaven there is no night (when city gates were locked); the poet implies a slightly different explanation by his juxtaposition of the open gates with a paraphrase in 1067–8 of Rev. 21:27 (*And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth* [aliquid coinquinatum], *neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie*): no undesirables to close the gates against ever arrive in the city. His lines also reflect actual practice in medieval cities, which could and did, when necessary, bar entrance to or exit from the town itself and even to streets and lanes within it, as in *Sir Beves* 4343–8: 'Thai shette anon everi gate ... Everi lane and everi strete Was do drawe with chaines grete' (a situation the reverse of that described in *Pe* 1065–6).

1069 For a similar use of **acroche** in the context of what today would be called physics, cf. Gower: 'And fyr, when it to tow aprocheth, To him anon the strengthe acrocheth Til with his hete it be devoured' (CA 5.5623–5).

1070 **grym**: the appropriate sense here is that in which the word was used to describe gross, heavy and unwieldy persons (cf. *PP*

B.5.354, *Pierce the Ploughman's Crede* 221). To **spotty ho** is: the spots on the moon were something medieval science had addressed itself to, and they are the subject of a learned and technical 'explanation' in Dante's *Divine Comedy* (*Paradiso* II.49–148). The ideal of 'spotlessness' running throughout the poem here reaches a climax in which the absence of (primarily moral) defilement referred to in the Vulgate (see n. to 1065–8) is expanded by added details that amount to a kind of otherworldly physics (or metaphysic) based on an innate repulsion of all grossness of matter: the translucence of solids (1049–50), the absence of impurities to impede the flow of the river (1059–60), the **spotty** moon that is disabled by grossness of body from absorbing the rarefied light of this city (1069–70).

1072 compas: a semi-technical word used of the orbit or course of a planetary body. Cf. Lydgate, *Troy Book* 2.238 (of the sun) and Envoy 10–11 ('Lucyna [= the moon] ... Goth compas rounde with hir pale light').

1077–80 *In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month* (Rev. 22:2).

1077 schym: the adjective is found only here, and may well have been improvised by the poet from the attested verb *schimen* [shine, be bright].

1085 dased quayle: the quail, like other low-nesting birds not especially fast in the air, tends to stay absolutely still (instead of taking to flight) in the presence of danger. The habit is so marked that it was said that, if flushed by dogs into the sight of a bird of prey, it would instantly freeze – and thus be a sitting duck for its captors (Topsell 80). To 'couche [cower motionlessly] as doth a quaille' (*CT* IV.1206) was semi-proverbial. The verb *dase* is similarly used of numbed stillness at *Pa* 383. The simile is closely comparable with that of the soundless and motionless hawk (182–4) which had conveyed the paralysed fascination induced by the sight of that other vision of bliss and loveliness – the girl herself.

1086 fresch (MS *freuch*): the emendation to *frelich*, commonly adopted by editors, is implausible for metrical reasons (Putter and Stokes 2007: 485–6).

1088 glymme: probably from ON; though there are cognates in other Germanic languages, the word is not otherwise recorded in ME.

1090 For **bone**, when collocated with **abide**, meaning 'lot' or 'experience' that befalls someone, see *MED bon* n² 5(a) and (b).

1093–1100 The sudden inclusion in the visionary city of its occupants, who seem to gather spontaneously and as if out of

nowhere (**sodenly** and **without sumoun**: 1095, 1098), is the subject of a complex simile: the moon's appearance in the sky while it is still daylight – its arrival and presence virtually imperceptible against a non-darkened background – is similarly a phenomenon of which one 'becomes aware' (cf. 1095–6) rather than something seen to happen. The image is appropriate to the crystalline purity of the place and its denizens, the latter at one with the former, which suddenly becomes an animate composite.

- 1099 vergynes in the same gyse**: the girl's fellow-brides, identified with the 144,000 'followers of the Lamb' of Revelation (785–92). The regalia of her previously single image (193–228) are here seen as characterizing a multiple entity, a visual sign of the now corporate identity into which she has been absorbed, and the father finally 'sees' what she had tried to explain: that she is not a single queen or a unique bride (447–8, 784–7). The earthly concepts of singularity and individuality have no place here.
- 1103–4** *ME in* could mean 'on' or 'in', and here suggests that the position of the literal pearl *on* the breast is a sign of the bliss and purity *in* it (cf. 740, where **in-myddes** has the same effect). **blysful** and **with gret delit** are similarly poised between their subjective and their objective meanings: their primary sense is 'beautiful(ly)' (see *MED blisful* 3(c) and *with delit* sv *delit(e n*¹ 3(b)), but the words also refer to the bliss and joy which this company enjoy.
- 1105 glod**: in poetic usage, 'glide' was often used simply as a generalized verb of motion. In these poems, however, the more specific sense of the word is also usually relevant (cf. 79, *Pa* 269); in the present instance, a gliding motion is appropriate to the glassy surface of 1106 – and to the movement of maidens and queens, in connection with whom the word is not infrequently used: cf. *C* 1590 and *MED* sv *gliden* 4(a) and (c).
- 1107 Hundred thousandes** alludes to the 144,000 who are said at Rev. 14:4 to follow the Lamb (who here too precedes them: 1110) wherever He goes (cf. 889–900 and n.).
- 1108 all in sute her livres wasse**: influenced by Rev. 7:9 (*a great multitude, which no man could number ... stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes*). *livres* were the garb given by a lord to those in his service, who thus 'wore his livery'. The word emphasizes the subordination of individual identity to the group identity drawn from the master whose colours (cf. 1112) the followers wear.
- 1109 Tor to telle** (MS *tor to knaw* [know]): **tor** (from ON) is, by this date, found only in alliterative verse or as an element in alliterating phrases – of which 'tor to telle' was the commonest

and was almost certainly the original reading here (cf. *G* 165, 719).

- 1114 **plyt**: *plight* [state, condition], from OE *pliht*, was originally distinct from OF-derived *plit* [danger, sorry circumstances, etc]. But the two words had fallen together by this date, and in this MS both forms are used indiscriminately for either sense – and in *Pearl* provide useful rhyming options (cf. 647, 1015, 1075).
- 1115 The simile ‘mild as a maiden’ is conventional – cf. Chaucer’s Knight, who, ‘meeke as is a mayde’, never speaks churlishly to anyone (*CT* I.68–71) – but the expanded version of the figure here has the odd effect of actualizing the simile: those to whom it is applied *are* precisely ‘maidens’ (cf. 1099) at the divine reality betokened by the Mass (see 1064 and *n.*).
- 1119–26 Cf. Rev. 5:9–14 (describing the homage paid the Lamb before the throne of God): *And they sung a new song ... and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ... thousands of thousands ... And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him*. On the **alder men** (1119) in Revelation, cf. notes to 835–40 and 881–8. The **ensens** (1122), typically, has a more literal and less symbolic presence in the poem than in Revelation, in which the golden vials of the elders are *full of odours, which are the prayers of saints* (5:8).
- 1123 **abroched**: the metaphor is from opening a wine-cask: **glory and gle** are allowed to ‘pour out’ like wine. For the figurative usage of the verb, cf. e.g. *CT* III.177.
- 1135 **a wounde ful wyde and wete**: a reference to the spear-wound in Christ’s side (cf. 654 and *n.*). For the collocation **wyde and wete** as applied to a **wounde**, cf. *DT* 1328, *Rowlande and Ottuell* 940. The normal sense of the verb **wyse** is ‘guide, show, point out’. Our footgloss ‘show, be visible’ follows Gordon, but we have found no parallel for this intransitive sense.
- 1138 **who did that spyt**: the dreamer speaks as if uninitiated in basic Christian history and dogma (cf. 771–2, 919–22). The effect is to defamiliarize familiar material. The Lamb’s wound is as fresh as the dreamer’s question implies the crucifixion is for him, an event which he is now comprehending as if for the first time.
- 1141–5 The thinking is courtly: it was the business of a lord, at feasts and festivals, to encourage good cheer by a cheerful demeanour and to banish from his **semblaunt** all sign of personal care or distress: see e.g. *G* 467–9.
- 1141 **wene**: A&W and Gordon assume *wene* = ‘suppose’, here in a special (and otherwise unattested) sense of ‘doubt’ (‘No one would see fit to doubt the delight of the Lamb’). We have

understood it to be the verb *wane* in its sense ‘decrease, diminish’ (*MED* *wanen* v¹ (d); cf. **waning** [deduction, diminution] at 558); *weniand* [waning] in *The Towneley Plays* indicates that an *e* form (which rhyme has necessitated) was possible in the poet’s dialect. For post-positioned *none* (**delit non**), cf. e.g. ‘Thou getest fable noon ytoold for me’ (*CT* X.31).

- 1146 **laste** (the only record of the survival into ME of the OE verb *gehlaestan*) and **lade**: both words mean ‘fully fraught’ and belong to verbs that were applied primarily to cargo and provisions, etc, though the latter was also used of trees ‘laden’ with fruit. The alliterating metaphor gives body to the biblical notion of the ‘abundance’ of life promised to the saved (John 10:10).
- 1150 **Among her feres** belongs syntactically *apo koinou*, i.e. in common, with both 1149 and **that was so white** at 1150. The girl is thus placed both spatially and in terms of her attributes ‘along with’ her companions – from whom, however, she is instinctively picked out by the eye of her father, whose recognition and feelings instantly claim his own child (**my little quene**, 1147).
- 1151–2 **wade ... in gret delit**: a variation on the familiar metaphors ‘bathe in bliss’, ‘swim in gladness’, etc: see *MED* sv *bathen* 5(a) and *swimmen* 3(a); cf. *Romaunt of the Rose* 5022 (‘in vanite to droune and wade’) and the later but pertinent parallel in Hooker’s sixteenth-century *Ecclesiastical Polity*, ‘a sea of comfort and joy to wade in’ (V.lxvii.4), cited in *OED* sv *wade* 3b. The phrase thus suggests the human paradise towards which the mortal’s **luf-longing** directs itself – prompting, however, a resolve literally to **wade**, i.e. cross the river, something which, as a mortal, he has been told he cannot do (299–300). This wordplay on the figurative and literal senses of **wade** underlines how the father’s reaction is both humanly inevitable and fatally inappropriate to his daughter’s now supra-human state. **luf-longing** marks a return to the register of romantic love which had been initially used to express the preciousness of the child to her father (cf. 11 and n.).
- 1154 **manes mynde to maddyng malt**: the association between madness and mortal **man** (cf. 267, 290) is made several times in this final section (1154, 1166, 1199), and is applied particularly to the foolish attempt to resist the divine will, a point explicitly spelled out at 1199–1200. The overpowering **Delit** (1153) which is the immediate cause of the **maddyng** confirms earlier indications that otherworldly bliss is such as to overtax mortal powers (1081–92), with the result that **manes mynde** eventually ‘melts’. For a similar use of *melt* to describe a state of complete

loss of self-control, cf. ‘nygh she meltith for pure wood [rabid rage]’ (*Romaunt of the Rose* 276).

- 1158 With **fech me bur**, cf. ‘right as the ram renneth backward to *fecche the strenger strook* ... so *feccheth* this beem *his strook* ayenst the wal that stant byfore hym’ (Vegetius 168). **take me halte** is less clear and has been variously interpreted (‘strike me lame’, ‘take hold of me’); the parallelism with **fech me bur** suggests an identical grammatical structure (*infinitive* + *dative pronoun* + *noun*), and we construe ‘give me a check or restraint’ (*MED hold* n² 5), i.e. ‘restrain me’. **take** meaning ‘give’ is well attested (cf. *G* 1966). **halte** cannot represent the noun *halt* (not recorded before the late sixteenth century) but is a well-attested spelling of nominal *hold*.
- 1161 **bitalt**: an otherwise unrecorded verb, apparently from OE *tealtian* [totter, shake, move unsteadily], of which the only other instance is the phrase *talterande ythes* [‘rolling waves’] at *SJ* 286. It is presumably related to *tilte*, a verb likewise found only in alliterative verse and derived from OE *tyltian* (a variant of *tealtian*), which, in transitive usage, means ‘push, make topple’.
- 1162 **start ... astray** [leave one’s place, strike out]: see n. to [G 1716](#).
- 1163 **bycalt**: presumably from *bicalle*, which elsewhere means either ‘accuse’ or ‘call upon’ (as at 913); the required sense here (i.e. ‘called, summoned’) is not otherwise attested.
- 1165 **flonc**: a West Midland form of *flog* (see n. to [905](#)).
- 1166 For **arayed** used of the signs of a state of mind, cf. ‘With salt teres why be ye thus arrayde?’ (*Court of Sapience* 747).
- 1167 For **ronk** applied to the will given its head, cf. *C* 455, 873, *Pa* 298.
- 1169–70 Being woken from a dream by a sudden movement within it is a verisimilar detail found in both earlier and later dream-visions (cf. Skelton, *Bowge of Court* 526–32, and see Burrow 1993: 13–15). The naturalism is here not an end in itself: by jolting him out of his dream, the father’s human response to his own daughter in particular is revealed as inconsistent with the more corporate perspective proper to the next world.
- 1173 This image is the one consistently used by the father-narrator to refer to the death of his daughter (cf. 10, 41, 245), though she herself puts it more bluntly (958). For a similar use of **strayd** (here ‘fell, slipped’), cf. ‘Oure Lord God ... his blod strayed in [down into] the strete’ (*Castle of Perseverance* 2304–5).
- 1174 **raxled** is often translated ‘stretched’, a meaning which the verb certainly could have; but in the context of waking from sleep, it is found translating French *esperecier* [waken, rouse] and seems simply to refer to the bodily signs of return to consciousness (see

MED sv *raxlen* (a)).

- 1179 Both **quik** and the near-synonymous *lifty* are found translating Latin *vividus*, which itself (derived from *vivere* [to live]) provides a model for the metaphorical application to intensity of sense impression. The basic sense of the word **quik** [living] is presumably also relevant here.
- 1182 **of rich renoun**: though it could apply to the pearl-child in the looser sense of ‘splendid’ (cf. ‘Thei rafe [rent] ther robes of rych renoun’: *Metrical Paraphrase* 14403), the phrase could apply in its strict sense only to ‘the pearl of great price’ (732–5), i.e. heaven. It thus acts to conflate the two pearls and to indicate that the **longing** (1180) is no longer simply that of bereavement, but is for the greater whole, the heavenly **sightes** (1179), of which the girl is now realized to be a part.
- 1184 **veray avysyoun**: whether and which dreams could be regarded as revelations was a much-discussed topic. Dreams were commonly assigned variously to causes basically physiological (*somnium naturale*), psychological (*somnium animale*) or divinely inspired (*somnium celestiale*, of which Revelation was the archetype): cf. *House of Fame* 1–52, *Parliament of Fowls* 99–105, *CT* VII.2923–3156, *PP* B.7.149–67. The word **avysyoun** itself [what is shown in a dream] could be used of any dream – delusory or visionary; but **veray** [true, veritable] firmly categorizes this dream as a revelation of divine truth of the type experienced by St John.
- 1186 **stykes**: sometimes emended to *strykes* [proceeds], to produce a reference to the crown under which the girl walks. But *stick* in its sense of ‘be set firmly in position’ (see *MED* *stiken* 4a and 9a) suggests that she is being imagined as a jewel set *in* a coronal: a **garlande** could refer to jewelled diadems and chaplets as well as wreaths; and it seems relevant that the girl should be represented at this point as part of a greater whole. The **garlande gay** in which she is set is a metaphor for heaven, which is **endeles rounde** (738) (Bishop 1957).
- 1187 **doel-dougoun**: the common ideas of the world as a ‘vale of tears’ and the ‘foule prisoun of this lyf’ (*CT* I.3061) are here expressed in an alliterating compound apparently original to this poet (cf. the compounds at 337, 1041, 1094).
- 1189–94 Being content with **no more** (1190) would have led to **mo** (1194) – a paradox reflected in the verbs: had the dreamer **holden** himself (1191) within the prescribed bounds, that voluntary stasis would have led to progress forward (**drawen**, **driven**: 1193–4). The reasoning (that he would have got further by obedience) lends point to the word **mad** (1199) and its

implications of perverse disregard of one's own best interests (see n. to 267–75).

- 1196 **upon hem clyven**: for the verb used in the sense 'belong, be the allotted portion of', cf. 'dignytees and poweres ... suffren hemselfe to cleven or joynen hem to schrewes' (Chaucer, *Boece* 2.pr6.90).
- 1204 The noun sequence is in decreasing degrees of remoteness, with increasing emphasis on the benefits conferred by dependence on a superior: **God** becomes the (then) social reality of a **lord**, with all the security, patronage and protection that implied; and **frende** in this sequence has its more formal sense, common in earlier English, of a (usually powerful) 'benefactor' or 'patron' who will befriend one's cause or interests (cf. 'friends in high places'): see *MED* *frend* 1(b).
- 1206 **enclyin**: an adjective (< OF *enclin*) which elsewhere in ME occurs only in the sense 'submissive'; the sense here ('prone, brought low') is from French usage.
- 1208 As demonstrated by Davis (1966), 1208 is a formula of blessing used primarily by parents to children. The narrator's relationship with the 'pearl' is thus most explicitly owned and asserted at the very point at which it is being resigned. The form of words was itself especially associated with parental farewells (epistolary or actual); to **God I hit bytaght** (1207) has, in any case, as well as its strict sense, the implication of 'I said goodbye to it', since *biteche* [commend] *to God* figured commonly as a salutation used in, or as a periphrasis for, leavetaking (see *G* 1982, 2472–3). The parental formula has here a particular pertinence it did not usually have: the girl is being resigned to the Christ she now belongs to and whose blessing, in the fullest sense, she has received. He is the husband to whom the father now, in a manner, 'gives away' his daughter, together with his own rights in and duty of care for her.
- 1209 **That in the forme of bred and wyne**: both the relative **That** [who] and the Eucharistic real presence referred to create a submerged link in Christ between father and daughter and their two different orders of being: the heavenly Christ to whom she is ceded is revealed daily to mortals in the more enigmatic form of the sacrament of the altar.
- 1210 The reference is not to communion, which would not be taken daily, but to the elevation of the host, at this period the most solemn point of the Mass, when the priest raised the host (after the consecration which performed the miraculous incorporation of Christ) to demonstrate it to the congregation. The moment – marked by the pealing of bells, the sounding of the sacring bell

and the provision of extra illumination – was conceived of as that at which Christ entered again into the world: ‘hic in terris cotidie videtur dum per manus sacerdotum elevatur, cum hominibus conversatur’ [He is seen here on earth every day (cf. **uch a day**) when He is elevated by the hand of priests, and comes into the company of men] (Coventry Statutes, cited in Rubin 1991: 57). The dative pronoun **us** classes the first-person speaker with the congregation (cf. *Pa* 9–10), which suggests that the poet was either a layman or a clerk in minor orders below the rank of ordained priest (by whom alone the sacraments could be administered).

1211–12 The prayer for salvation that forms a common conclusion to ME narrative poems, secular and sacred (cf. *Sir Gawain*), is here adapted to fit both the form and the themes of the poem, since the last line draws the text into a lexical circle by echoing the first. The close has a more collective note (**us** in 1210, the collective noun **hyne**, the plural **perles**) than is sounded in the opening stanza, and in this sense shows the influence of the vision of the New Jerusalem – as a corporate state, a household deriving its being and identity from its **prince**.

NOTES TO CLEANNES

- 1–4 As in *Patience*, the virtue that is the subject of the poem occurs as its first word (**CLEANNES**) and is given biblical authority by being introduced as one of the eight Beatitudes (23–8; cf. *Pa* 9–45). The contrasting **Fayre formes** and **combraunce huge** offered by cleanness and uncleanness as subjects of discourse in the opening quatrain clearly reflect the contrasting fates met by the clean and the unclean in the exempla: the *fair* lot that befalls the clean (cf. 27) and the disasters that *cumber* [overwhelm] the unclean (cf. 901, 920).
- 2 **ho** [she]: both OE *clænnas* and Latin *munditia* were grammatically feminine nouns. Cf. the personification of the eight Beatitudes (including **mery Clannesse**) as ladies at *Pa* 30–33.
- 9–12 On the especial obligation on priests to be clean, cf. '[priests] þe on godes temple þenian sceolon & haligdom & halige bec handlian, þa scelon symble heora clannesse healdian' (cited from *Dictionary of OE*, sv *diacon*; cf. *Speculum Vitae* 12138–44); and for **hondel** applied specifically to the Eucharist (in which God's body was believed to be actually present), cf. also the reference in *Everyman* to the priest as someone who 'handeleth his Maker bytwene his handes' (739). **usen** in this context means, not 'use', as it is sometimes glossed, but 'partake of' (see *Lay Folks' Mass Book* 380–82), communion being associated particularly with the clergy, because most laymen simply saw the Eucharist at Mass, at the elevation (cf. *Pe* 1210), normally partaking of it only once a year at Easter.
- 9 Cf. 'Eft to trede on thy temple and teme to thyselfen' (*Pa* 316). For **temen** used in its social sense ('form part of the following of a particular lord or leader': *MED temen* v¹ 2(c)) and applied to the adherents of the Christian God, cf. 'alle that evre to Cryst wil teme, byhoueth be baptysed ...' (Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne* 9553–4).
- 12–16 The allusion is to the doctrinal point that the Eucharist is taken to one's salvation (12) if taken when cleansed of sin (through the sacrament of confession), but to one's damnation (13–16) if received unworthily.
- 18 The presentation of God as presiding over an impeccable household prepares for the Parable of the Wedding Feast (51ff), in which He is represented as a lord holding a feast.
- 19–20 **clene Bothe withinne and withouten**: contrast 'honest

outwith and inwith all fylthes' (14).

23–25 allude to Christ's Sermon on the Mount, in which He promises eight rewards for eight virtues (Matthew 5:1–11), one of which is purity of heart. The full eight are listed at *Pa* 13–28.

27–8 **Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God** (Matthew 5:8).

28 **with a love-cherre**: **love** is regularized from what we read as *loue* (read as *bone*, and emended to *leue*, by Menner and A&W), which Anderson glosses 'low'. For **loke ... with a love-cherre**, cf. the loving looks exchanged by Paris and Helen when they first see each other at *DT* 3105: 'So be loking of lenght with a love-cherre' (where MS *loue* definitely represents *love*, not *low*, which is spelled with *w* in that text: contrast 'he louted ... with a low cherre' at 1777).

29 **As so says** is a variant of the more normal 'As who says', a variant especially common in northern texts: cf. *Northern Homily Cycle* 20/103; *Cursor C* 19059, 19854; Rolle, *English Psalter* 13 (unnecessarily emended to *wo* by the editor).

33–4 prepare for the parable to come by introducing a common figurative equation between scruffy clothes and moral impurity: cf. the sin-stained clothes of Haukyn (*PP* B.13.273–330).

40–41 **cokres** [leg-coverings worn for extra warmth out of doors] are associated with outdoor labouring: cf. Piers, who, in preparation for ploughing, 'caste on hise clothes, yclouted and hole, Hise cokeres and his coffes [mittens]' (*PP* B.6.59–60). The **tabarde** was a sleeveless overgarment that was also worn by the labouring classes: Chaucer's Plowman wears one (*CT* I.541), and cf. the 'Curtel and tabard' in which a son is dressed by a mother who then 'dede him into felde goon To kepe swyn' (*Seege or Batayle of Troye* 268–70). The word **tote** denotes a projecting part of various kinds in ME, and a 'point' or 'tip' in Middle Dutch, in which it was also used of the toe of a shoe (*Middelnederlandsch Woordenboek* sv *toot* 2). It may bear a similar sense here, in which case **oute** would appear to mean 'worn away, gone': cf. 'Ther is a busch' I, 363: 'The grete bagge ... the bothom is ny outy; Hit is so roton on ych a side.' The closest parallels for the vagabond's disarray can be found in sympathetic descriptions of downtrodden labourers (cf. the poor Ploughman in *Pierce the Ploughman's Crede* 425: 'His ton toteden out as he the londe treddede'), but, in marked contrast with that tradition, the poet here enters wholeheartedly into the logic of the coming parable (in which the lord rebukes a guest for wearing working clothes on a feast day: 141) and presents the peasant's clothing as disrespectful slovenliness.

- 47 **schrowde feble** (cf. **goun feble**: 145): for the application of the adjective to unmagnificent clothing indicative of low status, cf. ‘And therhinne dede hire fede Poureluke in feble wede’ (*Havelok* 322–3) and (of a queen who disguises herself) ‘Un draps mult feble vestu a’ (*Protheselaus* 12466).
- 48 **in tale ne in touch**: ‘in word nor in deed’ is the explanation (accepted by most editors) suggested by Skeat (1901: 289) of MS *in talle ne in tuch*. But the spellings are unusual, and **touch** is not recorded in the required sense. We may be dealing with other words and with another idiom (perhaps involving clothing: see *MED* *taille* 1(b), ‘cut, fashion’) meaning ‘in any way’, which is the sense required here. Anderson in fact glosses ‘neither in general appearance ... nor in detail of dress’ and assumes some literal reference to clothing (which would *not* make sense, as the point is that the unsuitable clothing would be offence enough for punishment (47), *though* (48) no *other* sin were committed).
- 49 **worthlych** is emended to *wordlych* (a possible form of *worldly*) by A&W. The reference is indeed to a mortal prince; but that perhaps does not need to be spelled out.
- 51 **As Mathew meles in his Masse**: cf. ‘As Mathew meles in your Messe’ (*Pe* 497). The poet assumes his audience would be familiar with the Parable of the Wedding Feast from its use at Mass as a Gospel reading (on the twentieth Sunday after Trinity). His own retelling of it actually combines Matthew 22:1–14 with the version of the parable in Luke 14:16–26. Only Matthew contains the guest who offends the host, and only Luke contains the excuses offered by the invited and the vivid description of the wayfarers.
- 51–4 ***The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage*** [Luke 14:16: *coenam magnam* [a great supper]] ***for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying ...*** (Matthew 22:2–4). The poet follows Luke in having only one initial message sent, as opposed to the two in Matthew. The reference to **comly quoyntyse** has been added to prepare for what is to come; for **quoyntyse** meaning ‘finery’, see *MED* *queintis(e)* 3(b) and (c).
- 55–60 Elaborated from Matthew 22:4: ***Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.***
- 57 **penne-fed**: free-range meat was not prized in the Middle Ages, when pen-fed cattle and poultry were a luxury (Wilson 1973: 119). WA and MA offer as examples of delicacies, respectively, a ‘penyd hoge’ (4407) and ‘Pygges ... that pastured neuer’ (183).

- 59 **right to the sete:** Menner assumes adjectival *sete* (cf. G 889) and glosses ‘appetizingly’. We follow Anderson, who assumes *OED seat* 1 (‘an assembly at a banquet’), where the citations include e.g. *Ormulum* 11059 (‘He turnnde waterr inntill win ... Att an bridaless saete [wedding feast]’).
- 61–72 ***And they all with one consent began to make excuse*** [excusare]. ***The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground*** [villam emi], ***and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come*** (Luke 14:18–20). Matthew (22:5) is more summary, but his version underlies lines 71–2, which is where the poet turns back to Matthew for the next stage in the story: ***But they made light of it*** [neglexerunt], ***and went their ways*** [abierunt], ***one to his farm*** [villam suam], ***another to his merchandise.***
- 66 **yat:** the poet’s normal past participle is *geten*; he here selected the variant *yat* for alliterative reasons.
- 67 **byes:** MS *hy3e3* is usually retained and glossed ‘servants’, but the MS reading is suspect on the grounds of metre and *hy3e* is nowhere else attested as a form of ME *hine* or *heue* [servant] (the latter in any case confined to more southerly dialects: Kaiser 1937: 286). The word *by* [farmstead] fits the context well.
- 73–92 The poet omits the verses in Matthew (22:6–7) which tell of the ill-treatment of the messengers by those who sent their excuses and the resulting destruction of themselves and their cities by the lord (events not in Luke). Matthew then continues (22:8–10): ***Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy*** [digni]. ***Go ye, therefore, into the highways*** [exitus viarum], ***and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.*** Luke 14:21 has: ***So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city*** [plateas et vicos civitatis], ***and bring in hither ...*** The remainder of the verse (listing the lame and the blind, etc) is used at 97ff.
- 76 I.e. the Gentiles, the heathens who have no knowledge of the Christian message, are less to blame than those who, having heard the Gospel, decline its offer. The *Northern Homily Cycle* makes the same point apropos the Parable of the Vineyard: those who are invited to go to God’s vineyard but make excuses are worse than the Saracens, who have never heard tell ‘Nouthir of

hevene ne of hell. Forthy be we on Domisdaye Wele more blamid for synne than thai' (*Northern Homily Cycle* 14/162–4). This is in fact closer to the point of the Parable of the Wedding Feast as it appears in Luke, where the target of the story (which ends at 14:24 with the statement translated at C 105–8) is those who refuse the invitation, not the ill-clothed wedding guest, who does not appear in Luke.

- 86–8 The poet moves down the social hierarchy from the **bacheleres** (knights retained by a feudal lord) and **Swyeres** (the squires who attend or *sue* them) to non-gentles who travel on foot, first freemen and lastly bondmen (i.e. serfs). The poet's meticulous observance of hierarchy, here and in the seating arrangements for the Wedding Feast (92), has no counterpart in the Bible.
- 90 **Stightled with the steward**: the steward was in charge of household affairs, and arranging lodgings is often associated both with him and with the verb *stightelen*: 'His steward stightled al his meyne' (*William* 1199), 'He commande ... To styghtylle the steryn men as theire statte askys, That they bee herberde in haste' (*MA* 156–8).
- 91 The **marschal** was responsible for household protocol; his duties included arranging seating at feasts (cf. *StE* 337–8), precedence being therefore a matter in which he was expected to be expert: 'To the birthe of uche estate a marshalle must se' (*Book of Nurture* 1105).
- 93–108 The poet follows Luke in having two trawls for guests, as opposed to Matthew's one. But he uses Matthew for the first (see n. to 73–92) and combines Luke's two into the second. ***Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper*** (Luke 14:21–4). The poet's reorganizing selection from the two accounts makes more of a downward progression between the two searches than occurs in Luke: from the streets (77) to the open fields (98–9), and from the varied ranks of the hale and travelling (86–8) to the disabled and homeless (99–103).
- 98 **Ferkes** is Gollancz's emendation of MS *ferre*. The MS reading is defended by Anderson and Vantuono, but the repetition of comparative **ferre** (97) would be clumsy and positive 'far' is always spelt *fer* in this MS (except at line ending at G 1093, 'fro ferre', where the form is prompted by metrical requirements).

Ferkes out reflects Luke's *Go out* [exi: 14:23], though the imperative is there singular, since only the one 'servant' is addressed, whereas the lord in the poem speaks to a body of servants (**gomes**, **segges**, **ledes**: 77, 93, 97) and therefore uses the imperative plural (**Laytes**, **feches**, **Waytes**: 97–9).

- 105 **redily**: MS *certez* does not alliterate and is not a word that occurs anywhere else in the MS; **redily** is well attested in the sense of 'certainly': *MED redili adv*² 2(d).
- 106 **denounced me noght**: the verb meant 'announce, reveal (the truth), make known'. Gollancz translates 'proclaimed'. Anderson glosses 'borne witness to, acknowledged', citing from *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch*, 'Aouret l'ont et denonciat' (with reference to the three kings adoring the infant Jesus). Cf. the reference to prophets who endured persecution in the name of God 'qu'il avoient denoncé et adoré' (*Dictionnaire du Moyen Français* sv *denoncer* 2). The sense 'proclaimed (as Lord) by their actions and words' suits both the two French examples and the context in *Cleanness*, where it is pertinent to both the secular lord and to the heavenly Lord he represents.
- 112–24 have no parallel in the Bible.
- 115–16 The seating arrangement is that of the medieval hall: the highest-ranking are seated at the high table (**The derrest at the highe dese**: cf. *G* 445, 'the derrest on the dese'); the others **bilooch** at tables placed lengthwise (**on lenthe**) down the sides of the hall. Cf. *G* 114–15.
- 117 **as segges serely** is Gollancz's emendation of MS *a segge soerly*; **as** is supported by **So** (118) and **segges** by the plural pronoun **her** (117). **by her wedes**: the order of seating is determined by clothes, those dressed most richly being assumed to be the highest-ranking (114–15).
- 119 For the collocation of **Clene** and **compayny**, and the sense of **Clene** here ('splendidly dressed'), cf. 'Themperour ... romed him ayens / with the clenest cumpanye that ever king ladde, / & whan the clene cumpanyes comen togadere, / the sight was ful semly' (*William* 1609–12). **forknowen** can scarcely represent the recorded verb *for(e)known* [foresee], and must therefore be a different and otherwise unrecorded one. It has been assumed (by Anderson, A&W and *MED*) to show prefix *for* (not *fore*) in its pejorative force and glossed 'neglected', with **lyte** as adverb, but this gives weak sense. The sense that would best fit the context (of guests assembled from travellers and beggars) is that there were few who stood out as elegantly dressed for a party. We therefore assume adjectival **lyte** [few] and prefix *for* used with intensifying rather than pejorative force (*OED for*, *pref*¹ 8 and 10)

and follow Menner (who glosses ‘recognized, perceived’) in assuming **forknowen** = ‘clearly seen’.

- 123 Cf. ‘men ben mery in mynde when thay haf mayn drinke’ (G 497), ‘That man much mirthe con make For wyne in his hed that wende’ (G 899–900).
- 124 **mach** [mate, companion]: for the term used of a mess-mate, cf. PP B.13.35, 47 (var.), with reference to the meal hosted by Conscience: ‘Pacience and I were put to be macches’, ‘Bifore Pacience breed to brynge and me that was his macche’.
- 125–38 An expansion of Matthew 22:11: ***And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment.***
- 125 **NOW**: Significant developments in the various narratives are marked in the MS by a line beginning with a three-line-deep initial capital. We mark these lines by using upper case for the initial word in the relevant lines, as here. In three instances, the initial capital is larger – at line 1 (eight lines deep) and at lines 557 and 1157 (four lines deep) – and these capitals indicate the larger organization of the poem into a triad of three major exempla, occurring as they do at the transitions between them. These lines are marked in our text by preceding I, II and III and by emboldened upper case for the first word.
- 128 On **cherisch**, see n. to G 946.
- 131 **syledede**: *silēn* [flow, sink] occurs in verse with the generalized sense of ‘go’, but when so used it always indicates fairly formal or even ceremonial procession: see illustrations in *MED* sv *silēn* v² b. The word thus indicates formal procession down the ranks of his guests, and indicates that the lord is observing the forms belonging to the occasion (as he expects his guests also to do).
- 134–5 The lines occur in reverse order in the MS (which also reads *hit*, not **He**, in our line 135). Previous editors have not emended, but their retention of the MS reading involves some tortuous and unlikely syntax: A&W treat our 135 as a parenthesis between 133 and our line 134, and Anderson translates **he fonde ... the throng** as ‘he found there was a thrall not properly dressed for a festival’, which assumes a very unlikely word order over 133b and our line 135a.
- 135–6 **halyday** is always elsewhere used of an actual holy day. The occasion is in fact a pre-Christian wedding feast (52), but since marriage was a sacrament in the Christian Church, the term is not without justification here. **festival** could be used of secular festivity, but, in contrast with **werkes**, also retains here its stricter reference to Church feast days, on which worldly labour or **werkes** was supposed to cease. The verb *filen* could refer to

literal soiling, but also to moral defilement and desecration of the sacred: see *MED filen v* (2) 1 and 2. The terminology thus points to the allegorical level of the parable (by giving a moral-spiritual dimension to the social impropriety of the unbefitting garment) and is also consistent with the presentation of sin as involving an element of sacrilegious defilement of consecrated objects and occasions (cf. 5–16, 1133–52).

- 139–52 *And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless* (Matthew 22:12).
- 145 **ungoderly**: the precise sense and derivation are not known. The word occurs here and at 1092.
- 146 **gnede** [niggardly, scanty, scarce] is Morris's emendation of MS *nede* (since adverbial *nede* occurs only in senses involving inevitability). Cf. the scribal variation between *gnede* and *nede* at *Cursor* 8599, 9107 and 2488, where 'the pasture tham bigan to knede' (= *gnede* [grow scarce]) appears in MS T as 'her pasture tho wex al nede' – which Anderson takes as indicating the existence of adjectival *nede* meaning 'scanty', citing the line in support of his own gloss of C 146: 'You set a very poor and meagre value on me and my house.' But the word reads more naturally as an adverb, and the line seems to mean 'You honoured me and my house in a most poor and niggardly/scanty manner'.
- 147 **prest to aproche my presense**: the echo of line 8 ('And aprochen to His presense and prestes are called') serves to link this exemplum with the sacrilege committed by unclean priests; cf. n. to 135–6.
- 150 **hurkeles down with his hed**: *hurkelen* occurs in alliterative verse with reference to the crouching or nestling posture of a timid hare or bird (*WW* 13, *P3A* 19, *WA* 504). Its use here vividly captures the gesture by which the alarmed guest attempts to hunch down his head out of harm's way.
- 153–60 *Then said the king to his servants [ministis], Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth* (Matthew 22:13). The Bible here begins to reveal the moral of the parable, since the wording clearly recalls scriptural descriptions of Hell: cf. *many ... shall sit down ... in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness* [*tenebras exteriores*]: *there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth* (Matthew 8:11–12).
- 158 **dougoun** was often used figuratively of Hell (cf. *PP* B.Prol.15), and here corresponds to *outer darkness* in the Bible. For the

- alliterative collocation with **doel**, cf. **doel-doungoun** at *Pe* 1187.
- 159 Gollancz emends MS *gryspyng* to **gryspytyng**. Editors have defended the MS reading as a possible shortened form, comparing the MS variant *gryspude* (for *grysbat*) in Mirk's *Festial* (see *MED* sv *gryspen*), but the emendation is supported by metrical considerations, since the b-verse requires a long dip.
- 160 For **quoynte** [elegant] meaning 'smartly dressed' (*MED* *queynt(e adj 1(f))*), cf. 'Y ... was sumtyme so queint and gay [splendid] in my good arraye' (*Knight of La Tour-Landry* 38).
- 161–4 Combining Matthew 22:2 (*The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son*: cf. C 51–2) with Matthew 22:14 (*For many are called, but few are chosen*).
- 164 **fulwed in font**: cf. 'fulloght in fonte' (*StE* 299). The poet reflects orthodox doctrine in representing baptism as a prerequisite for eligibility for salvation.
- 172 **lyned with the lykyng**: since *u* and *n* are indistinguishable, **lyned** has been transcribed elsewhere *lyued*, but **lyned with** can certainly enter into clothing allegories (cf. Skelton, *Bowge of Court* 177–8, 286) and would here pertinently point to the inner *will* that in orthodox doctrine determined the virtue or otherwise of all outer **werkes** (171).
- 178–88 For comparable catalogues in the Bible, see 1 Corinthians 10:7–10, Matthew 15:19, Galatians 5:19–21. The present list of sins that can cost us the kingdom of heaven begins with the recognizable deadly sins of the spirit: sloth (178), pride (179) and various forms of covetousness and wrath (181–4). The poet then progresses from such archetypal sins to more topical abuses (185–8).
- 180 **develes throte**: a common image for the mouth of Hell, going back to the Old Testament (e.g. Isaiah 5:14).
- 185–6 **dysheriete** and **depryve** are explained by Anderson and A&W as infinitives with the force of verbal nouns ('disinheriting', 'depriving'). The term **dowrie** referred to any property to which a wife or widow had legal claim. Widows were notoriously vulnerable to attempts to wrest their property from them by lawsuits or other means: cf. *Troilus* II.1416–21, 1465–84; *Ordinances of Chivalry* 70. There were likewise lawyers ready, if offered sufficient bribes or fees to do so, to find ways of annulling marriages: see *PP* B.XX.138–9. **mayntnaunce** is a word much used in connection with contemporary abuses of power in local and legal affairs, especially the keeping of retinues that often amounted to private armies (whose outrages were the subject of much protest), and the abetting or protecting of client wrongdoers (see *MED* *maintenaunce* 1(a) and (b) and 2(b)); it is in

connection with the last matter that the construction with **of** occurs elsewhere.

- 195 Prince that Paradise weldes:** cf. ‘to the Prince of Paradise’ (*G* 2473), ‘the prince that paradise weldes’ (*StE* 161).
- 197–204** The poet’s claim that God reacts to **fylthe of the flesh** with uniquely rabid passion has no biblical or patristic authority and involves some startling theology. For he represents God as being eminently passible and irascible in these circumstances, losing all His divine **fre thewes** (i.e. His calmness, long-suffering, mercy, etc), and in fact guilty of what in humans would be clearly recognizable as the sin of wrath: He acts **hastily** and **sodenly** (200–201), growing **wod** [rabid] for **wrath** (204); contrast *Pa* 520 and Chaucer’s Tale of Melibee (a warning tale directed at wrath), ‘ye moste also dryve out of your herte *hastifnesse*; for certes, ye may not deme for the best by a *sodeyn* thought that falleth in youre herte, but ye moste avyse yow on it ful ofte’ (*CT* VII.1134).
- 201 unsoundely:** see n. to *G* 1438.
- 205ff** The punishments of Lucifer and of Adam and Eve are offered as examples of God visiting severe punishment, but in a considered and controlled manner (cf. 215, 230, 247), not with the precipitate violence provoked in Him by **fylthe of the flesh** (202).
- 205–32** The story of Lucifer’s fall is not in the Bible, but was developed by early commentators with the aid of such biblical hints as Rev. 12:7–9, Isaiah 14:12–15 (partially quoted at 211–12) and Ezekiel 28:14–19, where verse 17 (recalled at 209, 217–18) reads *Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground.*
- 208 unkyndely:** the root of the word is *kind* [nature], and **unkyndely** in contexts such as this one denoted the violation of what was regarded as a natural obligation or bond (see *MED unkindeli* adv 3), an act of filial, marital or feudal *disloyalty* or *ingratitude*. Lucifer, returning the gifts of his **Soverayn** (210) with rebellion, thus acts **unkyndely**, i.e. ‘disloyally, ungratefully, unnaturally’, showing (though created **athel**: 207) the coarseness of feeling of a **carle**.
- 209 were:** subjunctive *were* sometimes occurs in place of indicative *was* at line ending for metrical reasons, to provide the required line-final unstressed syllable (Putter et al. 2007: 43–4).
- 211–12** *For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will*

ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High (Isaiah 14:13–14).

- 213 God's vengeance strikes as soon as Lucifer speaks. Cf. 'Talia *iactantem* praecelsa Potentia caelo / *iecit* et *ieictum* prisco spoliavit honore' [even as he threw out these words, the All-Mighty threw him out of heaven and robbed the outcast of his former glory] (Avitus II.45–6).
- 214 For the sense of **dere** here, see n. to *Pe* 504.
- 215 **methe**: emended from MS *met3*; cf. 565 ('In the mesure of His mod and methe of His wille'). The MS reading has been defended as a form of *mes* [blow], but only in verb endings does *t3* represent *s* in this MS.
- 216 The expression **tythe-dole** was common. It was often used of tithes, but also in other contexts (e.g. *William* 5346), and the variant *tithe part* occurs in *Tithe-Giving* 21 to explain why God created man ('God wil nat the tith part of hevene to be voide and idel'): to fill the tenth part of heaven left empty after the expulsion of the rebel angels (often believed to have been the tenth of the ten angelic orders; cf. 'The tend ordyr of angell Thurgh pryde ... Unto fowle fendes fell': *Metrical Paraphrase* 69–71). **tour** is taken by Anderson and A&W to be a form of *atour* [entourage], but there is no dictionary support for either the existence of an aphetic form of *atour* or for the use of *atour* in the sense of 'entourage'. For **tour** used of the stronghold of heaven, cf. *Pe* 966, *Harrowing of Hell* 31, *Cursor T* 487 ('And thus he [Lucifer] lost that heyte tour').
- 217 **feloun**: the crime of 'felony' (cf. 205) referred specifically to an act of disloyalty towards one's feudal superior and was punishable by exile and loss of lands and goods to the king (Alford 1988: 58). Lucifer has been disloyal to his Lord and thus forfeits heaven.
- 221 **fendes ful blake**: the beautiful angels became ugly fiends only after their treason. Cf. 'But fellen out in fendes liknesse [for] nyne dayes togideres' (*PP* B.1.121).
- 222 **as the snaw thikke**: cf. 'Seue daies and seue night, As ye seeth that fallith snowe, Vte of heuen hi alight, And in to helle were ithrow' ('Fall and Passion' 25–8). The source may be the apocryphal *Life of Adam and Eve* 106: 'And he and alle his feeren fullen out of hevene: heo fullen as thikke as the drift of the snouh.'
- 223 **as the hyve swarmes**: cf. 'Right so as bees out swarmen from an hyve, Out of the develes ers [i.e. the pit of hell] ther gonne dryve Twenty thousand freres on a route, And thurghout helle swarmed al aboute' (*CT* III.1693–6).

- 224 **forty dayes lenthe**: nine is the number in Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Langland (see n. to 221), seven in 'Fall and Passion' 26–9 (see n. to 222). The metre-prompted **forty** is justified by its association in the Bible with trial and tribulation: e.g. the Flood lasts for forty days (369, 403), Moses dwells on the Mount for forty days (Exodus 24:18), Christ fasts for forty days in the wilderness (Mark 1:13).
- 226 **smylt** [ʔsieved]: *MED* records this as past participle of a verb that occurs only here and compares Scottish *smuil* [break into fragments], treating *smult* at *DT* 910 ('the dragon ... With a smorther and a smoke smult through his nose') as past participle of a different verb, *smolten* (which occurs at *C* 461 and 732), though both verbs appear to be similar in sense ('filter, slip, escape') and to be related to Scottish *smool* [slink, sneak] (see *SND* sv *smool*).
- 228 **erde** is Gollancz's emendation of MS *worlde*, which does not alliterate. Man was created to replace the fallen angels (see 240 and n.), but for the assumption that man's world of *earth* already existed when Satan fell, cf. *PP* B.I.124–5.
- 229 **This**: the top of the first letter is indistinct, and the character, though usually read as a thorn, is transcribed as Y by A&W. But *Yis* as a narrative interjection usually occurs to contradict a contrary assumption (cf. 1113, *Pa* 117).
- 231 **for wylnesful**: **wylnesful** occurs only here and is emended to *wylfulnes* by A&W, but retained by Anderson and in *MED*, where it is convincingly explained as formed from the genitive of the noun *wilne* [will] in the same way as the well-attested adjective *willesful* was formed from the similar noun *wil(le)*. In ME, the construction *for* + *adjective* means 'because of being ...' (cf. *G* 1440). In connection with the treachery of this **feloun** (217), the legal connotations of 'wilfulness' (see Alford 1988: 167–8) are probably relevant here: cf. '... were forsworen ofte; Witynge and wilfully with the false helden' (*PP* B.19.373–4).
- 231–2 The poet is explaining why a God famed for mercy showed none to Lucifer; cf. 'For God oweth not yif him [i.e. Lucifer] mercy That ther aftir wolde not cry' (*Cursor* T 485–6).
- 233 **the routhe was little**: previous editors have assumed the reference is to Lucifer's lack of remorse (cf. 231–2, 234), but that impenitence provides the reason *why* his punishment **Forthy** [therefore] provides 'little occasion for sorrow on his account' (see *MED* *reuth(e)* 3(a)). For *negative* + *reuth* used in the sense of 'no tears to be shed', cf. 'No ruthe were it to rug the and ryve the in ropes' (*York Plays* XXX.391).
- 238 **pryvyly**: glossed 'apart' by A&W, 'apart, specially' by Anderson

and 'especially for him' in *MED*. The last is attractive, but no parallels for such a sense are cited.

- 240 The notion that mankind was created to take the place of the banished angels was common. Cf. 'Adam therfor was wrought than The tent ordir for to fullfill That Lucifer did for to spill' (*Cursor* 514–16).
- 242 **empoysened**: the same metaphor is applied to the apple (which brought death to mankind) in *StE* 295–6: 'Adam, oure alder ... ete of that appull That mony a plyghtles pepul has poysned for ever.' For **parted** meaning 'descended', cf. **departed** applied to birth at 1074.
- 252–64 The idea that people before the Flood were more beautiful, and had no **maysters** (252) and no law except that of **kynde** [nature] (263), rests on the common association of this biblical period with the classical Golden Age (see e.g. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.88ff). Cf. 'illa prima aetas saeculi gloriosior et excellentior fuit caeteris futuris aetatibus ... homines illius primae aetatis nullam legem habuerunt, per quam Deum cognoscerent, nisi naturalem' [this first age was more glorious and more excellent than the future ages ... men of this first age had no law by which to know God other than natural law] (Philip of Harveng, col. 586–7), 'Then was no lernyng of no law; Thei lyfyd in lust even at ther lyst' (*Metrical Paraphrase* 277–8).
- 256 **longest lif in hem lent**: on the longevity of the generations before Noah, see Genesis 5:3–32; for the collocations, cf. *Pa* 260 ('That any lif myght be lent so long him withinne').
- 259 On subjunctive **were** here, see n. to 209.
- 263 Living before the Old Law of Moses and the New Law of Christ, the antediluvians have only natural law to obey (cf. n. to 252–64). The law of **kynde** is the basic moral code 'written in the hearts' of all human beings, of whatever belief (Romans 2:14–15).
- 265–8 Genesis 6:5 refers only to *malitia* [**wickedness**]. The poet attributes the Flood more particularly to sexual practices 'against nature', as had others before him, who also referred explicitly to homosexuality. Anderson cites Higden, *Polychronicon* II, 230: 'Usque ad septimem generationem filii Seth fuerunt boni; sed postmodum viri abusi sunt viris, et mulieres mulieribus' [until the seventh generation the sons of Seth were good men; but after that, men practised abuses with men and women with women]. Cf. also *Genesis and Exodus* 531–8 and *Cursor* 1569–72 ('Wommen as we hit fynde Went togider ayeynes kynde And men also the same wise As the deucl wolde deuyse'). This assumption can be traced back to the *Revelationes Sancti Methodii* (Twomey 1985), the apocryphal Book of Enoch (Lewis 1968: 21) and Romans

1:26–7, which refers to those God had punished in the past: *God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.*

268 **wymmen with other** (MS *with other*): the MS appears pointlessly to repeat 267b. Though Anderson suggests **other** could refer to the **fende** of the next line, the a-verse is plainly corrupt, since it lacks a first alliterative stave (for which **with** is an unlikely candidate). Since biblical exegesis regularly referred in this context to homosexuality among women as well as men (see previous n.), insertion of **wymmen** is the obvious solution.

269–72 ... *the sons of God* [filii Dei] *saw the daughters of men* [filias hominum] *that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose* (Genesis 6:2). The ‘sons of God’ and the ‘daughters of men’ were commonly interpreted (as by Langland at PP B.9.128) as referring respectively to Seth’s offspring and Cain’s. This poet equates the ‘sons of God’ with the fallen angels. Cf. ‘ly enemys d’enfern venoient sovent coucher ovesqez femmes de sa generacion et engendroient diverse gentz monstres’ [the devils from hell came often to lie with women ... and begat on them many monstrous races] (Mandeville, *Livre* 379). Mandeville’s source is Josephus (*Antiquitates* 32).

272–6 Expanded from Genesis 6:4: *There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.* The poet’s amplification is reminiscent of Avitus IV.18–20: ‘sed princeps sibi quisque fuit virtute nocendi; / nec meritis sed mole potens; qui fortior esset, / hic melior sibimet, sed se censore, placebat’ [but everyone thought himself a ruler on account of his power to inflict harm, and strong because of his prowess rather than his merit; whoever was stronger prided himself on being better].

272 See *MED* *jape* 2(b) and (c) for the sexual sense the word could have.

281–5 The lines are an amalgamation of Genesis 6:12, *And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth*, and Genesis 6:6, *And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart* [Et tactus dolore cordis intrinsecus].

286–91 *And the Lord said, I will destroy* [Delebo] *man whom I have*

created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them (Genesis 6:7).

289 **schal doun**: omission of verbs of motion is frequent in ME, especially with the adverbs *up* and *down*; cf. 'Doun shall the castell' (*Romaunt of the Rose* 5868).

291b–292 The lines are based on a variant reading of the Vulgate: *Et praecavens in futurum* [**And taking care for the future**].

Originating in the Greek Septuagint (Lecklider 1997: 94–5), this variant occurs in numerous medieval MSS of the Vulgate after Genesis 6:7 (Vercellone) and also influenced other biblical poets. Cf. 'Eschuir vout des anqui en avant Pur sa justice, que mais nou feïssient' [he wanted from now on, by executing his justice, to prevent them from doing it ever again] (*Bible anonyme* 919–20). **kepe** thus appears to have the sense 'govern', shading into 'hold in check' (*MED* *kepen* 8a, 14c, 16 and cf. 11c), rather than 'observe' (Anderson) or 'take note' (A&W), unless the statement is triply tautologous (**wayte** [watch out] and **be ware** [be aware] being very close in meaning).

293–7 *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God* (Genesis 6:8–9).

298–300 *And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth* (Genesis 6:10). The order in which the three sons are recorded is assumed by the poet to indicate the order of their births; cf. 'The first was Sem, Cham was the tothir, And Japhet hight that youngest brother' (*Cursor C* 1929–30).

299 The b-verse is suspect since it does not alliterate and ends in a stressed syllable.

301–8 *And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me [coram me]; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy [disperdam] them with the earth* (Genesis 6:13).

305 **me wlates** (cf. 1501): the application of the verb to divine displeasure has biblical precedent. Cf. *because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue [evomere] thee out of my mouth* (Rev. 3:16), rendered as follows in *Ancrene Wisse* 151: 'thu makest me to wleatien ant Ich wulle speowe thee ut'. Cf. also Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne* 3539–40: 'swyche men [backbiters] God almyghty hatys And with here foule synne hym wlatys'. The poet is thus exploiting existing linguistic associations between physical disgust and moral abhorrence.

307 The line renders *disperdam eos* (see n. to 301–8), the sense of which is sufficiently conveyed by **strye all togeder**. There is no

evidence that **strenkle** [sprinkle, strew] can mean ‘vent’, and the verb does not usually denote a forceful action; its pertinence in context is not therefore clear. The sense of **distresse** is also arguable. Anderson glosses **strenkle my distresse** ‘put forth my power’. But **distresse** = ‘coercion, force’ is usually found following a preposition (cf. 1160), and would be unidiomatic with the possessive adjective, which indicates the sense here is ‘anguish, distress’. God presumably means that His distress will have effects that will not be simply local, but will be dispersed throughout the world to **strye all togeder**.

- 309–13 **Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms** [*mansiunculas*] **shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch** (Genesis 6:14).
- 312 **cleme ... with clay** occurs in other contexts, with reference to e.g. pots and crocks: see *MED clemen* v 1(a); i.e. the expression and the procedure were familiar.
- 313 **endentur** refers elsewhere to a legal document cut along a zigzag or ‘indented’ line so that the two parts (one for each party to the contract) tallied exactly with each other. It here refers to the joins (between planks) which Noah is to caulk; cf. ‘Myche yren to the naylis of the yatis, and to endentyngis and ioyningis’ (Wycliffite Bible, 1 Paralipomenon 22:3).
- 314–17 **And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits** (Genesis 6:15).
- 314 **lome** [container, vessel], used of a ship only in this MS (cf. 412, 443, 495; *Pa* 160), illustrates the lexical lateral thinking encouraged by the alliterative metre.
- 315 The line lacks its second alliterating stress. Perhaps **cubites** should be emended to *elnes* [ells]. Cf. *Genesis and Exodus* 563–5 (‘Thre hundred elne was it long ... and l.ti elne wid, and xxxti heg’) and the gloss in Nicolas of Lyra’s *Postilla* (‘Hebraei autem loco cubitorum dicunt ulnarum’).
- 318–20 **A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof** (Genesis 6:16).
- 318 **openande** (MS *vpon*): the detail was added to the Bible by many versifiers in anticipation of the later dispatch from this window of the raven and the dove (453: ‘Then waft he open his wyndow’; cf. Genesis 8:6). Cf. ‘[Make a] windou sperand wel on hei’ (*Cursor C* 1683).
- 321–2 The lines correspond to the conclusion of Genesis 6:16, which reads in the AV **with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it**, though the Latin Vulgate does contain a reference to

rooms (*coenacula* [dining or upper rooms], *et tristega facies in ea*), and is similarly understood (and expanded) to refer to accommodation for animals in the *Towneley Plays* 3.192–5: ‘Make in thi ship also Parloures oone or two, And houses of offyce mo For beestys that ther must be.’

322 bolkes (MS *boske*³): Anderson suggests that *boskes* might be from *bos* = ‘cowshed’, and Gollancz and A&W emend to *boskens* (from a supposed diminutive of *bos*), but there is no dictionary support for these supposed forms. Menner and Vantuono give to *boskes* its normal (but contextually implausible) sense of ‘bushes’. *Bolk* (a variant of *bulk*: see *Pa* 292) is well attested in the required sense of ‘stall, shed’: cf. ‘That no man hold no swyn in hur bolkys ne in her stallys’ (*Coventry Leet Book* 27). Scribal error occasioned by confusion of *l* and long *s* thus seems likely.

323–6 *And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life* [*spiritus vitae*], *from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die* (Genesis 6:17).

327–32 *But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons’ wives with thee* (Genesis 6:18).

327 Defective alliteration indicates that a word has dropped from the end of the a-verse (probably an *f*- adverb: e.g. *frely*).

328 in resoun has rengned: see *MED* *regnen* 4 (‘live, follow a way of life, persist in’).

333–8 The lines reduce and conflate two passages from Genesis: *And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive* (Genesis 6:19–20); *Of every clean* [*mundis*] *beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean* [*immundis*] *by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth* (Genesis 7:2–3).

334–5 clene: for the definition of ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’ animals in Jewish ritual, see Leviticus 11. **horwed** is from *horwen* [pollute, defile], and the cognate adjective *hory* is likewise used in connection with the ceremonially unclean in the earlier version of the Wycliffite Bible at Leviticus 22:6 (‘eny unclene whoos touchynge is hory [Latin *sordidus*]’).

339–40 *And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for*

them (Genesis 6:21).

341–2 *Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he* (Genesis 6:22).

343–52 An expansion of Genesis 7:1: *And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.*

353–8 *For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth* (Genesis 7:4).

354 **routande**: the verb was commonly used of storms; cf. ‘tempestes routynge’ at *Book of Vices* 71. **ryg** (from ON) is not elsewhere recorded in English before the seventeenth century (see *OED* sv *rigg* n¹).

359–60 *And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him* (Genesis 7:5).

359 **nye**: MS *niy3* is usually emended to *nyght*, but it is explicable as a form of *noye/nye*. **nye ... begins** would normally indicate ‘starts to inflict *noye*’ (see *MED* *biginnen* 5(a)), but the contrast with **styntes** [desists from] probably pushes the sense towards ‘takes up’.

361–9 *And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth ... the same day were all the fountains of the great deep [abyssi] broken up, and the windows of heaven [cataractae caeli] were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights* (Genesis 7:10–12).

363 **ryfe** (MS *ryse*): Anderson translates *bonkes con ryse* as ‘the land rose up’ (under pressure from the springs below) and cites *Cursor* C 1767–8 (also based on Genesis 7:11: see previous note): ‘the see to ris, the erth to riue, / the springes cum ouer-all utedriue’. But those lines suggest that in *Cleanness* the scribe confused *f* with long *s* and miswrote *ryfe* as *ryse*.

364 **Waltes out uch welle-hed**: cf. ‘To-walten all these welle-hedes’ (428).

368 **rayn-ryfte** is usually explained as referring to cloud gaps through which rain could fall. But the verb **To-rent** could not be used of a gap formed by something already riven, and Anderson (who translates ‘rain-sluices’) is probably correct in seeing in **rayn-ryfte** a rendering of *cataractae caeli* in Genesis 7:11 (see n. to 361–9): he points out that ‘*OED* (s. *Cataract*, *sb.*, sense 1) defines the biblical word as “the ‘floodgates’ of Heaven, viewed as keeping back the rain”’. **ryfte** here (and in the similar **lake-ryftes** at 536) indicates a hollow or channel for water; the image is of rain as water contained in heavenly channels or floodgates

that burst as the clouds cleave (367).

369 and then the flod rises: for the dramatic switch to the historic present in the b-verse, cf. ‘Then suppe behoved The coge of the colde water, and then the cry rises’ (*Pa* 151–2).

370–402 The lines are independent of the Vulgate. The poet is drawing on a long tradition of spectacular renditions of the Flood in versifications of the Bible (see Putter 1996). The set piece in Book IV of Avitus provides the closest analogue. Cf. also *Cursor* 1762–1800, Herman de Valenciennes 208–21.

370 Overwaltes: the verb elsewhere means ‘topples, overthrows’ (cf. *G* 314), but has obviously here a slightly different sense (‘overwhelms’) not otherwise recorded.

371 Cf. *Pa* 145 and n. to *Pa* 145–9.

377–95 With 379–80, 385–6 and 390–95, cf. ‘Ascendunt turre et celsa domorum Culmina praesentemque juvat vel tempore parvo Sic differe necem ... It fragor in coelum sonitu collectus ab omni / quadrupedumque greges humana in morte cadentum / augent confusos permixta voce tumultus’ [they clamber up towers and the highest roofs of their houses, which serves briefly to defer present death ... A clamour rises up to heaven made up of the cries of all, and the herds of four-footed animals who fall amid the human deaths increase the confused commotion with their added voices] (*Avitus* IV.474–87).

377 feng to the flyght: cf. ‘he fonges to the flyght’ (457).

381 Bot all was nedles her note: the same expression is used at *Pa* 220, where it similarly refers to fruitless efforts to evade the effects of a storm sent by God.

384 demmed [showed dark, darkened] is usually assumed to represent ‘dammed’ and is glossed ‘was filled up, overflowed’ by Anderson. But there is no evidence that the verb *dam* could be used in that intransitive sense; **demme** at *Pe* 223, which has also been assumed to represent *dam*, probably in fact means ‘grow dark’ (see n. to *Pe* 223). Floodwaters are described as **dym** at 472, and *demme* is an attested spelling of the verb *dimme* [grow dark], a spelling especially plausible in this MS, which contains several examples of the lowering of *i* to *e* (cf. MS *swepte* and *sweng* at *Pe* 354 and 575).

385 drye (MS *dry3e*): Anderson glosses ‘secure’, taking the word to represent ME *drie adj*² ‘grave, lasting, unchanging’ (used at 74, 342, 344, 476) rather than *drie adj*¹ ‘dry’ (< OE *dryge*), which is elsewhere in the MS spelt *dr(u)ye*. But *drie*² does not occur with that sense, and, since representations of OE *y* in the MS vary (cf. MS *huyde* and *hyde* for ‘hide’, 682, 915), it seems preferable to assume here the contextually more probable sense of ‘dry’. The

lack of concord between **mountaynes** and **was** is not uncommon in ME, especially when an intervening noun (here **mor**) acts to influence the verb form (cf. *Pe* 85–6 and n. to 86).

- 395 **That amounted the mase**: the sense could be ‘With the result that the tumult increased’ (Menner), since *amounten* (= increase) is not elsewhere transitive. But the sense ‘That increased the confusion’ finds some support in Avitus, where animal cries ‘augent confusos ... tumultus’ [increase the confused commotion] (see n. to 377–95). Anderson glosses ‘that amounted to vanity’, but in the sense ‘amount to’ ME *amounten* is normally followed by *not* or *noght*.
- 397–402 The pathos of human beings saying their last farewells is paralleled in Sabie, *Old Worldes Tragedie* E2r: ‘There might you have seen how lovingly the mother With her sweet daughter kissed one the other ... The dying sonne nowe at the latest gasp About his clasping fathers necke did claspe; And ready now to bid their last farewell Were snatched both with seas and billows fell.’
- 403–8 **And the flood was forty days upon the earth ... And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth ... All in whose nostrils was the breath of life [in quibus spiraculum vitae est], of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed** (Genesis 7:17–23).
- 407 The ON-derived verb **mourkne** [rot] occurs only here in ME, though *MED* records one instance of an apparently related noun *mork* [dung].
- 408 Except for one instance in which it is used to refer to a ‘vent’, **spyrakle** otherwise occurs in ME only in Trevisa, *Properties* I, 92, where, as here, it translates Latin *spiraculum* [breath]. **in sprang** is usually printed as one word, but Vulgate *in quibus spiraculum vitae est* (see n. to 403–8) suggests it is not necessary to posit an otherwise unattested verb ‘inspring’. For *spring* used of the stirring or thriving of life, as here, see *MED springen* 3 and 4. **sprawlyng**: the verb was used of the convulsive movements of men or animals in the throes of death: e.g. ‘he drow [the fish] into the drie place, and it began to spraulle bifor hise feet’ (Wycliffite Bible, Tobit 6:4).
- 409–12 **... and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark** (Genesis 7:23).
- 411 **Him aghtsum**: the construction is well attested and dates back, as Anderson points out, to OE: cf. *Beowulf* 3123 (‘eode eahta sum’ [went as one of a company of eight]).

- 413–24 are independent of the Bible. The poet deals with the same subject (a ship in peril in stormy seas) in *Pa* 137–64, and in doing so is taking up with gusto a common topos suited to the alliterative metre (Jacobs 1972). The two passages evince the same command of nautical jargon and the two poems share several items of vocabulary (**gotes, waltered, dam, mast, bawelyne, Cable, ankres, Hurrok, rother**).
- 416 **in daunger**: the phrase here combines its later sense with its earlier one (derived from *daunger* = power): the ship is *in danger* precisely because, lacking all the usual navigational aids (417–20), it is completely *in the power of* the flood, *at the mercy of* the winds and waves (421–2).
- 423 **hit rolled on rounde**: cf. ‘hit reled on rounde’ (*Pa* 147).
- 424 The idea of God ‘steering the ark’ may be based on Wisdom 14:6 (describing the ark in the Flood): *quae manu tua erat gubernata [thy hand guiding the helm]*.
- 425–9 These computations combine the information on Noah’s age given at an earlier point in the Bible, just before the rain begins (at line 363 in the poem), with information that is given at the point of the story now reached: *In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened* (Genesis 7:11); *And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days* (Genesis 7:24).
- 430 **ythes** (MS *yre3*) is an emendation adopted by all editors except Vantuono. Scribal confusion between long *r* and *p* is not uncommon.
- 431–2 The lines are based on biblical material found at the same point as that rendered in 407–8 (most of the intervening lines being independent of the Vulgate): *And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven* (Genesis 7:23, repeating almost verbatim 7:21).
- 433 **roughly** (MS *rozly*) is treated in *MED* as a form of *reuli*, and ‘piteous, wretched’ does aptly describe the state of the ark at this stage. But **ruly** is always elsewhere adverbial in this MS, whereas adjectival **roughly** does occur (*Pa* 64).
- 434 **joyst** is puzzling. *MED* follows Emerson 1919, who explains it as past participle of *joisen* [be glad], but even in diminished sense (‘fortunately’), this would be inconsistent with the emphasis on the grim situation that is only alleviated when God intervenes (**Bot**: 435). A&W gloss ‘lodged’, but there is no evidence the word could have that sense. We have treated it as past participle of

MED justen 3 ('bring [things or people] closely together'), which occurs in collocation with *join* at DT 938 ('Vnioynis the iaumys [dragon's jaws] that iuste were togedur'). 'Closely united' would yield appropriate sense, as would Anderson's gloss (based on the assumption that the word represents adverbial *juste*) of 'closely, tightly'. The spelling is anomalous with regard to either of these proposed derivations. Anderson's explanation, that *just-* could occur with *oi/oy* spellings in OF, is not supported by attested forms.

435–42 *And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged* [*imminutae sunt aquae*]. *The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped* [*clausi sunt fontes abyssi ...*], *and the rain from heaven was restrained* [*prohibitae sunt pluviae de caelo*]. *And the waters returned from off the earth continually* [*Reversaeque sunt aquae de terra euntes et redeuntes*]: *and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated* [*et coeperunt minui per centum quinquaginta dies*] (Genesis 8:1–3).

444 For *weather* in this collocation having its sense of 'bad weather', cf. 'So the wedour and the wynd on the water metyn That alle hurled on an hepe ... Lete the wedour and the wynde worche as hem lyked' (*SJ* 63–6).

445–8 *And the ark rested* [*Requievitque*] *in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat* [*super montes Armeniae*] (Genesis 8:4). The poet's additions with regard to geographical nomenclature derive from Mandeville, which he knew in the original Anglo-Norman (see n. to 1015–48) and which refers to a 'hill called Ararat [*montaigne qe ad a noun Ararath*], but the Jews call it Thanez, where Noah's ark came to a halt' (*Livre* 292). Some editors emend **Mararach** to *Ararach* but **Mararach** is confirmed by alliteration and supported by variants (e.g. *Maroth*) in the MS tradition of Mandeville.

446 *rasse*: see n. to G 1570.

449–52 *And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen* (Genesis 8:5).

453–68 There is no condemnation of the raven in the Bible, which simply reads *And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth* (Genesis 8:6–7). Perpetuating a misunderstanding of the Hebrew in the Greek Septuagint, the Vulgate includes the words *et non revertebatur*, which led

commentators to suppose that the raven was faithless, having found dead bodies to feed on (Lewis 1968: 39). This assumption then entered popular tradition. Cf. ‘Ales ut extensis nitidum petit aera pinnis, / adspiciens plenis stipata cadavera terris, / carnibus incumbens et mox oblita reuerti / rectorem placidum communi in sede reliquit’ [when the bird had soared into the bright sky with outspread wings, seeing the corpses spread out plentifully on the shores, it alighted on the flesh and, promptly forgetting to return, abandoned his kind master in the dwelling shared by all] (Avitus IV.565–8). The incorporation of this apocryphal material allows the poet to use the raven as another instance in which moral turpitude is associated with ‘filth of the flesh’ (cf. **foule flesh** at 462).

454–6 **message** [messenger] ... **rebel** ... **corbel untrue**: the word **rebel** (which serves to align the raven with Lucifer: see 210–12) was one of deep opprobrium and carried none of the romantic charge it can have today, the disobedience to one’s sovereign or master it betokened being seen as treacherously disloyal in origin and anarchic in tendency. The story of Noah’s disloyal raven (**corbel untrue**) led to its becoming a byword for a faithless and negligent messenger: cf. *Cursor* 1886–92 and its source, *Bible anonyme* 1060–2 (‘Cilz i ala mais ne scot revenir. Encor dit on: cilz est de méz corbon Que on envoie et ne vient en maison’ [he went off but failed to go back. And still it is said: the one who is sent out and does not return home is the raven among messengers])).

456 **colored as the cole**: a conventional simile (see Whiting C324).

461 **smoltes**: see n. to **smylt** at 226.

463 **yederly foryete yisterday**: cf. *G* 1485.

464 We follow most previous editors in emending MS *kyst* to **chyst**, the failure of alliteration indicating that the scribe substituted the ON-derived *k-* version of the noun (which is always elsewhere the form in which the word occurs in this MS) for its OE-derived *ch-* equivalent. (Similar variation for metrical purposes between *kirk* and *chirche* occurs in *PP*.) On *kyst/chyst* as a term for the ark, see footgloss to 310.

466 **fodes** [creatures], **mete** [food]: **fodes** referred strictly and originally to beings nourished by food – a fact that gives it a peculiar relevance to context.

468 The raven is also cursed by Noah in the York play of Noah (IX.231–2).

469–80 *Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the*

ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark (Genesis 8:8–9).

470 **blessed**: see n. to G 1296.

473 **to bot** [to the boat]: A&W followed Menner in interpreting MS *bot* as a form (unattested elsewhere) of the verb *boden* and translate the line ‘Bring a message to announce bliss to us all’. Morris and Gollancz take *bot* to represent ‘boot’ [remedy]. We assume (with Anderson) that *bot* here means ‘boat’: when *bring bodword* is followed by *to*, the preposition regularly prefaces the destination (‘to the sale’, WA 48; ‘to the byschop’, StE 105, WA 1581; ‘to the bold king’, DT 8314).

481–92 *And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth* (Genesis 8:10–11). The poet omits the next verse, which records that Noah a third time sent out the dove, *which returned not again unto him any more*. For he has followed the tradition of anthropomorphizing the raven and the dove into contrasting faithless and faithful servants, and thus has no place for this indication that the dove had simply animal reasons for returning to the ark (because she could find no other perch) and that, like the raven, she failed to return on finding dry land.

483 **skyrmes**: the verb referred to ‘skirmishing’ in fencing or combat, though there are isolated instances of its occurrence in other senses (there are *skirmand* shrieks at WA 5283 and lightning which ‘skirmyt in the skewes’ at DT 12500); context is the only guide to its sense here in *Cleanness*. **skowtes** represents much the earliest instance of the verb *scout* (from French *escouter* [listen out for]); it occurs nowhere else in ME (though the noun **scowt-wache** does; cf. 838) and is not recorded again until the later sixteenth century. For the idiom **under skue** [through the air], cf. CT V.503 (‘Til I [the falcon] koude flee ful hye under the sky’).

491 **Then was there joy in that gyn**: cf. ‘Hit was a joyles gyn’ (Pa 146). **jumpred**: the noun is recorded nowhere else, but the verb [*junperen* = jumble] is. Anderson and A&W therefore construe **jumpred** as participial adjective used substantivally (‘those jumbled together’) and **dryed** as having its normal sense of ‘suffered’. We interpret **jumpred** as a noun and **dryed** as meaning ‘persisted (unabated)’ – a meaning not specifically recognized in MED, but consistent with some of the usages recorded sv *drien* v² 2(b); MED posits the nonce-meaning ‘exist’ (*drien* v² 2(c)).

493–6 *And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the*

first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried (Genesis 8:13–14).

498 the Tulk that tynded hem thereinne: cf. *and the Lord shut him in* (Genesis 7:16).

499–504 *And God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark ... And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him: Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark* (Genesis 8:15–16, 18–19).

499 Cf. Pa 63 and see p. xvii.

505–8 *And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar* (Genesis 8:20).

505 **odde**: an interesting rationalization. The animals are preserved in pairs to save the 'seed' of all species (Genesis 7:3), yet the 'clean' beasts are also specifically said to be preserved in sevens (see 334 and Genesis 7:2): hence this deduction that there was a 'spare' of each clean species which Noah could use for sacrifice without detriment to the reproductive purposes for which the beasts had been spared.

509–20 *And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart* [the Vulgate has simply *ait* [said]], *I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth* [adolescentia sua]; *neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done* (Genesis 8:21).

511 **with that ilke** is assumed by Anderson and A&W to mean 'with that same man (i.e. Noah)'. But in the poem and in the Vulgate, it is the smell of the sacrifice that immediately prompts God's words, and **with that ilke** thus means 'thereupon' (i.e. 'on smelling the sacrifice'): see *MED ilke* 2(b), e.g. 'he with that ilke feng to wenden heowes' (*Seinte Iulienne* 33). On the poet's sympathetic response to the Old Testament ritual of sacrifice and the sensuous appeal of its *savour*, see n. to Pa 333–6.

514 **muckel mayne** (MS *mayny*) **molde**: *mayny* appears to be an error for or a form of the adjective *main(e)* [great]: see Emerson 1919. Gollancz and Anderson print the adjective and noun as a compound, since *maegen* often formed the first element of a compound in OE. But **mayne** occurs elsewhere in collocation with **muckel** ('Of mony & of mekill-quat mayn giftis': WA 3905), and Layamon 7630 is syntactically and metrically close to the

present line: ‘Aenne muchelne mæin clubbe he bar an his rugge.’ A&W (following Morris and Menner) emend to *mayny on molde* (‘company of people on earth’), but this obscures the point made by God in the Bible, which is that He will not *curse the ground* [*terrae*] **any more for man’s sake** (Genesis 8:21).

- 517 **barnage** [youth], which consists of a French suffix added to a Germanic root (*barn* [child]), may well be the poet’s own coinage, for it occurs nowhere else. It corresponds to Vulgate *adolescentia*.
- 519 **schortly** is another indication that the Deity is seen as having been betrayed by His disgust into the sin of wrath (see n. to 197–204), and into pronouncing those hasty (as opposed to considered) sentences which those in power were supposed to avoid; cf. ‘he, allas! by hasti Iugement, Withoute respite or avisement, Shortly hath dempte that she shal be ded’ (Lydgate, *Troy Book* 4.6693–5).
- 521–7 **While the earth remaineth** [*Cunctis diebus terrae*], **seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful** [*Crescite*], **and multiply, and replenish the earth** (Genesis 8:22–9:1).
- 525 **somer, ne the sadde wynter**: cf. ‘As wele in sesoun of somere as in the sad wintre’ (WA 3021).
- 527 **renne restles** (Genesis 8:22: *non requiescent*): cf. ‘The tyme ... resteles [French *sans repos*] travayleth ay’ (*Romaunt of the Rose* 369–70).
- 528 This differs from the Bible, where it is the humans who are blessed (9:1) and to whom (as earlier to Adam) dominion over all beasts is **bitaght: into your hand are they delivered** [*traditi sunt*: 9:2].
- 529–40 Lines 529–33 correspond to the biblical verse in which the different animals that are to be subject to human rule are listed: **And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hands are they delivered** (Genesis 9:2). In *Cleanness*, the different animals are characterized by the different destinations to which they move, a theme elaborated upon in an independent addition to the biblical material in 533–39. This produces a climax to the story very different from the anthropocentric one of the Vulgate – and one which is, remarkably, without the rainbow, which figures not at all in the present retelling of the story of the Flood. Man’s dominion over the *earth* (540), rather than the beasts, figures in one final line, which acts rather to produce a

parallel between the animals and the humans who there likewise find their natural place in the scheme of things.

- 529 **skaylyng and skylnade**: MS *skyllý skynalde/skyualde* has defied convincing explanation. The least unsatisfactory solution is that of *MED*, which treats *skyllý* as an adjective (from *skill* = reason, cause) meaning ‘wise, skilful’, and follows Gollancz in emending *skynalde* to **skylnade** (< ON *skylnaðr* [separation]), though there is no other evidence that the word existed in ME. Since the line plainly concerns dispersal, we have retained Gollancz’s emendation and introduced a further one that normalizes a-verse metre by means of a form derived from a recorded verb of largely northern currency (see Kaiser 1937: 86).
- 536 **lake-ryftes** [pits or caves in hollows or crevices]: **lake** here is *MED lak(e n 1 3(a)* [pit, lion’s cave], not 1(a) [expanse of water], or 2(a) [river], under which *lake rift* erroneously figures, glossed ‘ravine worn by water’. *Lacus* is the regular term in biblical Latin for a lion’s den (e.g. in *lacum leonum*: Daniel 6:7). **lyounes** and **lebardes** form a standard collocation in alliterative verse (Oakden 1935: 290).
- 543 **cherished**: the word is used of favour extended by a lord or host to his subjects or guests: see 128 and n. to G 946.
- 544 **His thewes**: unconvincingly explained as ‘the virtues which He had established’ (A&W) and ‘His ordinances’ (Menner). ‘His good disposition, His goodwill, grace’ (Anderson) is the natural sense of the phrase: the poet is repeating his earlier claim that ‘filth of the flesh’ deprives God Himself, in His response to it, of His customary ‘fre thewes’ (203).
- 549–52 The lines are problematic, and have been variously glossed and punctuated, according to interpretation of **that sittes unclene**: Anderson construes ‘which remains uncleansed’; Gollancz as ‘which befits foully’; A&W as ‘[he who] will sit down unclean’. Our footgloss assumes a changed and elided construction of a type not uncommon in ME, our interpretation of **that sittes unclene** being broadly similar to Gollancz’s.
- 553–4 Menner glosses 553 ‘In order that I shall appear in those bright dwellings’, but is unhappy with the omission of a subject for **schewe**, and of an indirect object for **behoves** (554). Anderson and Vantuono interpret **me** as an ethic dative (and the line as meaning ‘For those who shall appear ... ’), but the ethic dative (on which see footgloss to Pa 108) is unlikely here: it characteristically occurs at moments of narrative action rather than in the context of deliberative reasoning. We assume, with A&W, that **me** is the well-attested reduced form of the impersonal pronoun *man/men*.

- 554–6 On the beryl, see *Pe* 1011 and n. The pearl as a symbol of purity is the leading idea of that poem; with *C* 556 cf. in particular *Pe* 726 ('Withoute mote or mascle of sulphande synne') and 843 ('mote ne mascle').
- 555 This instance of **seme** figures in *MED* as an otherwise unattested extension of the sense 'gully, ditch, gutter' (*sem(e* n¹ (d)) into 'crack or flaw in a gem'. But the contrast with **sounde** suggests it is simply a metaphorical application of *sem(e* 1(e), 'bodily gash, slash, or scar'.
- 557 **SITHEN**: the four-line-deep initial capital marks the transition to the second major exemplum (the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah) and thus to the second part of the poem. On the rubrication of the poem, see n. to 125.
- 564 **knit a covaunant**: cf. 'all the covaunantes that we knit' (*G* 1642).
- 574 **The venym and the vilany**: cf. 'her vilany and venym' (*Pa* 71).
- 576 The reference is to the Beatitude paraphrased at 27–30.
- 577 **as helle that stynkes**: the same simile occurs at *Pa* 275.
- 581–90 Based on Psalm 93/94:8–11: **Understand, ye brutish** [*insipientes*] **among the people: and ye fools** [*stulti*], **when will ye be wise** [*aliquando sapite*]? **He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? ... The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity**. The same verse is paraphrased in *Pa* 121–4. **savour** (581) has obviously been prompted by *insipientes* and *sapite* and reproduces the double meaning of Latin *sapere* ('taste' and 'understand'), and **sumtyme** (582) corresponds directly to *aliquando*.
- 582 The adverb **babel** occurs only here. *MED* compares Latin *babulus* [fool] and glosses 'as a fool'. But it is probably related to AN *bable*, ME *babel* (n³), *babelen*, *babelinge*, all of which are from French *babiller* and refer to idle or indistinct talk, so the sense is probably more precisely 'as a babbling fool'.
- 583 **stare**, which occurs only here in the sense of 'sight', exemplifies the inventive use of proximate senses for alliterative purposes.
- 586 **lysten** as a noun occurs only here.
- 601–5 **And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door** [*in ostio tabernaculi sui*] **in the heat of the day** [*in ipso fervore diei*] (Genesis 18:1).
- 601 **OLD**: the large initial *O* in the MS marks the beginning of the second major exemplum (the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah) that forms the basis of the second part of the poem; cf. 249, where the beginning of the parallel story of the Flood in the first part of the poem had been similarly marked. On the MS layout, see n. to 125. Abraham's age is given as ninety-nine in the

immediately preceding chapter of Genesis (17:24). **in erde** [on the earth, in the world] is construed by Anderson as having not its common loose sense, but as meaning ‘in his country’, on the grounds that the Vulgate reads *in convalle Mamre*. But **erde** in that sense only ever occurs with a possessive, and the poet was following the Vetus Latina reading, which refers to an oak rather than a location (a vale) in Mamre (see next n.).

602 under an oke grene: the Vetus Latina, the older Latin text of the Bible, reads *ad ilicem Mamre* [at the oak of Mamre] instead of *in convalle Mamre* [**in the plains of Mamre**]. That reading persisted as a variant in some MSS of the Vulgate (Vercellone), and ‘Abraham’s oak’ entered popular tradition, figuring in works such as Mandeville’s, which tells us it is still standing on Mount Mamre, and was always in leaf until Christ’s crucifixion (*Livre* 177).

606–12 *And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground. And said, My Lord [Domine] ...* (Genesis 18:2–3).

606 On the use of **thrynne** [three] specifically and exclusively of three things that form a tripartite unity of some kind, see n. to 1727.

612 onhede was used of the unity constituted by the Trinity (*MED onhed(e* 1(b)), as well as of mathematical and other kinds of unity. It thus emphasizes what is merely implied in the Vulgate, where Abraham addresses the trio in the singular (*Domine*). Since the Old Testament was read as prefiguring Christian truths, this was often taken to confirm the doctrine of the Trinity. Other paraphrasers tended to be heavier-handed in underlining these Trinitarian implications: cf. *Metrical Paraphrase* 573–6 (‘Tokyn of the trinite To abraham ther was tone. All yf he saw ther thre, All he honerde os one’), *Cursor* 2703–12.

613–16 *And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant* (Genesis 18:3).

617–22 *Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said* (Genesis 18:4–5).

617–20 In the previous quatrain, the poet had (to emphasize how Abraham greets the trio of men **in onhede**: 612) followed the Vulgate in using singular *thou* forms of the second-person pronoun. He now uses the plural *ye* forms (as the Vulgate now uses *vestr-* forms).

- 618 **your fete were waschen**: the passive construction suggests that the poet's text of the Vulgate contained, not the standard *lavate pedes vestros* [wash your feet], but the common variant *lavatur pedes vestri* (Vercellone), which also influenced other biblical poets: cf. 'Et vostre pié soient lavé' (Malkaraume, *Bible* 220).
- 620 *MED* assigns to **banne** here the otherwise unattested sense of 'banish (care) from'. But the primary sense of the verb was 'summon troops', and it appears to be here simply a metaphorical application of such recorded senses as 'assemble forces', 'gather arms', 'man or make ready a castle', and to mean 'fortify' (corresponding to *et confortate cor vestrum* at Genesis 18:5). The often-adopted emendation to *baume* ('give balm to' in some extended sense) is unnecessary and unpersuasive.
- 623–8 **And Abraham hastened into the tent** [*tabernaculum*] **unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth** [*subcinericios panes*] (Genesis 18:6).
- 626 **Under askes** renders Vulgate *subcinericios* (*sub* [under] + *cinis* [ash]).
- 627 **sumwhat fat**: cf. the Wycliffite translation of Luke 15:23 (**And bring hither the fatted calf** [*vitulum saginatum*]): 'brynge ye a fat calf' (2nd version; 1st version: 'a calf mad fat').
- 629–44 An expansion of Genesis 18:7–8: **And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it** [*et coxit illum*]. **And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.**
- 635 **therve** is the poet's own addition, and shows his informed interest in Old Testament rituals, which he was very ready to exploit for the purposes of local 'colour' (see n. to 511): Exodus 29:2 and Leviticus 2:4 specify that any bread offered to God 'shall be unleavened cakes'. He would have been reminded of this fact by a later detail in his story, for the Bible represents Lot as being similarly careful to serve unleavened bread to his divine guests (Genesis 19:3).
- 642 **and his fest prayed**: cf. Gawain's polite praise of the ad hoc meal prepared in his honour: 'The freke calde hit a fest ful frely and ofte' (*G* 894).
- 643 **with armes up folden**: interpreted by Menner as meaning 'with arms folded', by Anderson as 'with arms uplifted (in prayer)', and by A&W as 'with arms extended'. *MED* sv *arm* n 3(c) assigns to **armes** the sense of 'sleeves' (not otherwise recorded before the eighteenth century), but glosses the phrase 'with arms raised or

extended' sv *upfolden*. Abraham's arms are not free to be folded or lifted in prayer, for he is acting as a **sewer** (639) – an attendant who usually actually waited at table – and so **Mynystred mete** (644). He is thus presumably holding up food from the kneeling posture in which those who served at table are often illustrated.

645–60 The poet omits Genesis 18:9, in which the guests ask Abraham where Sarah is, and Abraham answers, 'Behold, in the tent', and proceeds to an elaboration of Genesis 18:10–12: **And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life** [*Revertens veniam ad te tempore isto, vita comite* [while life accompanies you]]; **and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?**

647 The I of the speaker and the **thay** of the narrator reflect similar shifts between singular and plural person in the Vulgate. See notes to 612 and 617–20. In the phrase **here away** (treated as a compound by some editors and *MED*) **away** has the etymological sense 'on one's way, along' (*MED* *awei* 4). **I schal eft here away**, rendering *Revertens veniam*, thus means 'I shall come here on my way again'. Cf. 'Thou passes nevyr away here' (*Avowing* 647).

648 **ere thy lyves lyght lethe upon erthe**: cf. 'the ay-lastande life that lethe shalle never' (*StE* 347).

649–52 This material (an addition by the poet) is from a general memory of the story of Abraham, with whom God had made a covenant, promising that his descendants should possess the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:1–7), and (Genesis 17:20–21) that it should be the son promised to Sarah (Isaac) who would be **Abrahames ayre** (650), not Ishmael (his son by Sarah's handmaid Hagar).

654 **sothly** is sometimes emended to *sotyly* [furtively], in view of Vulgate *Quae risit occulte* (Genesis 18:12). But **to herself** adequately conveys the assumed privateness of the scorn, and suggests the poet was following the variant reading *risit in semetipsa*, recorded in Vercellone.

655 The line, equating to the Vulgate (... *voluptati operam dabo*), presents a number of problems. We follow most previous editors in emending MS *tonne* (of which no sense can be made) to **teme**; cf. 'Witt sinndenn off swille elde nu þatt witt ne mughenn taemenn' (*Ormulum* 202). **tykle** has been variously interpreted: as meaning 'uncertain' (*MED* *tikel* *adj*¹ (c)), or, in view of the Vulgate equivalent, as having some reference to sexual

- excitement: i.e. **for tykle** = ‘through being wanton’ (Emerson 1919: 505 and cf. *MED tikel* *adj*¹ (b), ‘lascivious’) or ‘because of sexual pleasure’ (as in *MED*, where the line is cited as showing that otherwise unattested sense of the noun *tikel* [tingling sensation]). Whether the line is interpreted as an exclamation or a rhetorical question depends largely on how **tykle** is interpreted.
- 659 **bileved**: MS *byeue* or *byene*. A&W emend to *bydene*, but that word does not mean ‘continuously’, as they gloss it, and their emendation involves some re-interpretation of the syntax: *fyaled ... before; ho barayn ... tyme*. Anderson emends to *had bene*, but participial ‘been’ could not yield the unstressed syllable required at the end of an alliterative line.
- 660 Menner notes the close parallel with Peter Comestor’s retelling of the story in *Historia Scholastica* (col. 1099): ‘Ad haec, etiam, ipsa sterilis erat’ [for up to now she had been sterile].
- 661–2 ***And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?*** (Genesis 18:13). The addition **there He sete** and the imperative **Se** remind us that Sarah (who is behind the door) has been seen from a position from which no human could see her.
- 663–6 ***Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son*** (Genesis 18:14).
- 664 **the vaunt**: MS *the avaunt* could produce regular b-verse metre only if the final *-e* of **the** could be apocopated (*th’avaunt*); but we find no evidence that the poet availed himself of this option in his alliterative verse; the single instance where spelling might suggest it (‘For when þacces of anguych’: Pa 325) is a scribal error, as the vowel alliteration shows.
- 667–70 ***Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh*** (Genesis 18:15).
- 671–80 ***And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way [deducens eos]*** (Genesis 18:16).
- 678 **conveye**: the ‘conveying’ of his guests (escorting them on their way and/or setting them on to the right path for their next destination: cf. 676 and see n. to G 1971–2) was the last duty of a host, and the poet has throughout emphasized Abraham’s punctiliousness in that role.
- 681–8 ***And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the***

way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him (Genesis 18:17–19).

- 684 **chef childeryn fader**: Abraham was the first and greatest of the *patriarchs* (literally ‘chief fathers’). The epithet recalls Genesis 17:5: **thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations** [*patrem multarum gentium*] **have I made thee**.
- 685 *MED* records no other comparable metaphorical use of **flete** in its sense of ‘overflow’.
- 689–92 *And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know* (Genesis 18:20–21).
- 690 **gares me to wrathe**: the poet’s point that uncleanness provokes God to what would, in humans, be the sin of wrath (see nn. to 197–204, 519) is here reinforced by God’s own ‘admission’ (which has no parallel in the Vulgate).
- 693–712 These lines are an addition to the Vulgate, and include a description of heterosexual love remarkable for its beauty, power and frankness (the poem being in fact, as a treatise on *cleanness*, remarkable in its total lack of interest in chastity as such). The terms of art (**compast, craft, kenned, dight, portrayed**) serve to present sexual deviance as a desecration of sacred art in a way that prepares for the third exemplum (the desecration of the temple vessels, which Solomon had needed all his high **syence** to **compas**: 1445–55). See pp. 91–2.
- 700 **play of paramores**: for the alliterative collocation, cf. e.g. *William* 1412, 2987.
- 706 **stille stollen**: cf. ‘With stille stollen countenance that stalworth to plese’ (*G* 1659); on **stollen** in amorous contexts, see n. to that line.
- 711 **smod** occurs only here. *MED* compares ModE dialect *smud*, *smod* [dirty mark], Middle Dutch *smoddich* and Middle German *smudden*.
- 713–20 The poet here rejoins the Vulgate, though the material he has added means that the immediate occasion for Abraham’s plea is, in the poem, what he has just heard God say, whereas in the Bible it is the fact that the men apparently prepare to proceed to Sodom without further conversation: *And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the Lord. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?* (Genesis 18:22–3).

- 713 **all his mod chaunged**: i.e. changed for the worse; cf. *Pa* 368 and n.
- 721–8 *Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee [Absit a te] to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee [non est hoc tuum]: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* (Genesis 18:24–5).
- 728 **so gaynly a God**: cf. ‘my gaynlyche God’ (*Pa* 83).
- 729–32 *And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes* (Genesis 18:26).
- 731 **forgyve all the gylt thurgh my grace one**: cf. ‘He [the King] will forgiffe yow this gilt of his grace one’ (*WW* 135).
- 732 **smolt**: *MED* records this verb as occurring only here and at 461 and *DT* 910. See n. to **smylt** at 226. The adverb **smothely** similarly occurs in *ME* only here and at *G* 407, where it also collocates with **smyten** (‘And thou me smothely has smyten’); the sense appears to be ‘without hitches, impediments or complications’.
- 733–6 *And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes [cum sim pulvis et cinis]* (Genesis 18:27).
- 733 **boner** is a shortened form of **debonere**; **debonerte** is attributed to God at *Pa* 418.
- 735 **tan up** has been supplied, since both sense and metre indicate something has dropped; cf. ‘Uch tulk mon do as he is *tan*, *tas* to non ille’ (*G* 1811). The Vulgate reads *Quia semel coepi, loquar ad Dominum meum*. Anderson leaves the MS unemended; A&W supply *towched*.
- 737–40 *Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it* (Genesis 18:28).
- 740 **withholde my hand fro** (MS *for*) **hortyng on lede**: MS *for* could be interpreted as meaning ‘to prevent’ on the analogy of *G* 1334 (‘Lystily for lausyng the lere of the knotte’), but in the latter case there is no competing idiom to raise expectation of *from*, whereas **withholde** = ‘hold back, restrain’ is regularly construed with *from* (see *MED* *withholden* v 1(a)). See *Pa* 439 and *G* 1863 for similar instances of scribal *for* for *fro*.
- 741–4 *And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty’s sake* (Genesis 18:29).

- 743 **thagh forty forfete not: not** has been supplied. Menner implausibly glosses **forfete** as ‘be without sin’, and Anderson follows *MED*, which (sv *forfeten* 4) glosses **forfete** here ‘be lost, undone (not necessarily by guilt)’, a sense borne by the verb at *MA* 1155 (‘We mon be forfetede, in faith, and flemyde for ever’); but it would in *Cleanness* be more than forty who would simply ‘be lost’ regardless of guilt or innocence, and the context of contrast between the innocent and the guilty would surely lead an audience to assume that the verb must apply to the latter, since its normal meaning is ‘transgress’. It seems simplest, therefore, to presume scribal omission of a negative.
- 744 **voyde away my vengauce** (cf. ‘Devoyde now thy vengauce’: *Pa* 284): the verb is regularly applied to the banishing of emotions (fear, wrath, etc): see *MED* *voiden* v 5(d). For the construction with **away**, cf. ‘Sche was thanne ioyful in alle wordly persecucyouns, voidynge away al dreede’ (*Orcherd of Syon* 56).
- 745–56 Expanded from Genesis 18:30: ***And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there.***
- 745 **highly**: MS *lo3ly* does not alliterate; we follow Menner’s emendation (cf. *G* 773). Anderson retains the MS reading, suggesting b-verse alliteration on **Him**, but alliteration on pronouns occurs only in the absence of an open-class word or when rhetorical stress is contextually justified.
- 746 **saviour**: the epithet was, of course, regularly applied to God the Son, but Abraham is a pre-Christian and here bestows it with reference, presumably, to God’s present willingness to save the sinful cities. It has, however, the effect of an unconscious prophecy of a future event that will confirm the applicability of the word to God. Cf. Jonah’s unconscious allusion to Christ at *Pa* 96.
- 747 **usles** (MS *vsle*) **so blake**: the emendation is required by metre (since the final unstressed syllable in which an alliterative line must end indicates **blake** is plural); the line is plainly a variant form of the formula found at 736b, ‘that mul am and asks’, a direct translation of the equivalent phrase in the Vulgate, which has, however, no equivalent for this second occurrence of the conceit.
- 749–50 are based on material transferred from Genesis 18:31, where they form the preface to Abraham’s next plea (see n. to 757–60).
- 755 **in space of my thewes** has been variously interpreted. Our gloss is based on *MED*, which assigns it to a sense of **space** (‘course,

custom': *space* n 13) for which it cites also CT I.175–6 ('[The Monk] leet olde thynges pace And heeld after the newe world the space').

757–60 *And he said, Behold now, I have taken it upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake* (Genesis 18:31).

761–5 *And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once* [loquar adhuc semel]: *Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake* (Cf. Genesis 18:32).

768 **conveyen ... with cast of his iye**: the idiom occurs in French and in Scots English, where it is especially associated with women looking lingeringly after lovers ('[Yseut] o lez euz le convoie': Bérout 2930; cf. *Ipomedon* 4975, Machaut 1130) or sons (see Douglas, *Aeneid* VIII.ix.115, where 'And did convoy or follow wyth thar sight' renders 'oculisque sequuntur'). The metaphor is that of a host 'seeing off' a parting guest (see *MED conveyen* 1(a)), and the context in *Cleanness* activates that social sense of the word (cf. 678).

769–76 The Bible has only *And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place* (Genesis 18:33). But Abraham's plea for Lot is found in other biblical versifications, e.g. *Genesis and Exodus* 1039–40 and Herman de Valenciennes 343–4 ('Cil merci li cria Que dant Lot ne perisse, et il li otria'). In *Cleanness*, God does not reply to a plea that is called out behind Him as He walks on – details which imply an ulterior motive in the previous pleas which Abraham could not reveal before God's face, motives God is nevertheless well aware of, as He had been of Sarah's private scorn, choosing on both occasions, however, not to enter into dialogue about these small duplicities (cf. 669–70) which He yet makes it clear He has registered.

772 **brother**: Lot is termed Abraham's *frater* in Genesis 14:14–16, but, as Isidore points out, 'Surely Lot was not Abraham's brother, but the son of his brother Aram' (IX.vi.10). However, the Latin word could, like English *brother*, refer to any kinsman. That **brother** is here the equivalent of *frater* in this more general sense, and not a misunderstanding of the Latin word, is proved by 924, where Abraham is specifically said to be Lot's **em** [uncle], a word erroneously 'corrected' by a second hand to *brother*, obviously inauthentic (since it does not alliterate) and suggesting a reader who did not know the Vulgate as well as the poet did and who had read **brother** at 772 in its stricter sense.

- 776 **As thy mercy may malt:** the same collocation occurs with reference to God in *PP* B.17.227–31, where the Holy Ghost is described as melting the power of the Father and Son into mercy: He ‘melteth hire myght into mercy ... So grace of the Holy Gooste the greet myght of the Trinite Melteth to mercy’.
- 779 **longing** [grief] is associated in this MS especially with anxiety about friends or relatives: see n. to *Pe* 244. Singular *won* is replaced by plural **wones** (with singular sense) only for metrical reasons, the usage being virtually confined to line end: see n. to *G* 1051, and cf. n. to *C* 209.
- 781–98 An expansion of Genesis 19:1: ***And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground.***
- 781 **HIS:** the new section coincides with a new chapter (19) in the Vulgate. We follow Gollancz in emending MS *sondes* to **sonde**. Anderson and Vantuono retain the MS reading, which, however, is called into question both by the singular verb (**was**) and by the sense ‘message’ (not ‘messengers’) required by context.
- 782 **twayne** occurs in place of *two* only for metrical reasons in this MS: it provides linking alliteration on *-n* at *G* 962, and is otherwise confined to line ending, where it ensures the required line-final unstressed syllable.
- 786 Lot’s richness (cf. 812, 878) was legendary – cf. ‘Thei [Abraham and Lot] wex so ryche that ther catell Couerd the cuntre fer and nere’ (*Metrical Paraphrase* 423–4) – and was based on Genesis 13:5–6: ***And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great.***
- 789–96 The description of the angels (which is independent of the Vulgate) rationalizes the Sodomites’ attraction to them and has parallels elsewhere in biblical paraphrases, e.g. *Metrical Paraphrase* 557–61, and Josephus, *Antiquitates* 149 (‘Sodomitae vero respicientes iuenculos nimio vultus decore praecipuos ... ad vim et iniuriam eorum pulchritudinis sunt conversi’ [the Sodomites who saw the exceedingly handsome young men ... went there to violate and harm their beauty]).
- 790 **rollande:** *MED* records no other instance of the word being used of hair.
- 791 **brere** [dog rose] often formed an option for alliterative indication of the rosy hue that was a conventional element of beauty: cf. ‘With rode red so blome on brere’ (*King of Tars* 14).
- 793 **Wlonk white was her wede:** cf. 19–20.
- 794 Cf. *G* 1761 (‘fautles of her fetures and of so fyne hues’), which

- provides the only other occurrence in ME of the word *faultles(se)*.
- 795 **aucly**: Gollancz mistakenly reads MS *autly* as *aucly*, which, however, gives good sense, and *MED* and most editors make the emendation. The letters *c* and *t*, often almost identical in medieval scripts, were easily confused by scribes.
- 797 **ros ... radly**: the collocation is a favourite with the poet: cf. 671; *Pa* 65, 89, 351, 378; *G* 367, 1735.
- 799–808 ***And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night*** (Genesis 19:2).
- 799 **he says** has been supplied. It is not the custom of the poet to omit the *inquit* formula, and supplying it makes for more typical a-verse metre, with a long dip between the stresses on **soberly** and **says**. Cf. *Pe* 256 (and see also *G* 2051).
- 801 **knaves kote** (Vulgate *domum pueri vestri*): Lot is being decidedly self-deprecating in representing his house – ‘ryal and rich, so was the renkes selven’ (786, cf. 812) – as the **kote** [hut, peasant’s small house] of a **knave** [low-ranking menial].
- 805 Cf. ‘And he nay that he nolde negh in no wyse’ (*G* 1836). *Nay* as a verb (from French *noïier/neier*) is well attested, but only in this MS can the past tense figure as **nay** (rather than *nayde/nayed*: cf. 65).
- 807 **logge thereoute** = ‘spend the night in the open’; cf. ‘herbered ... thereoute’ at *G* 2481. The next line, however, gives point to the paradox formed by the strict sense of the two words.
- 809–32 The lines correspond to Genesis 19:3 (which, however, the poet has much expanded and somewhat altered): ***And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.***
- 810 **granted to go and gruched no lenger**: the collocation of contrasting *grant* and *gruch* occurs elsewhere: cf. *Troilus* III.642–3, *DT* 8373 (‘That the Grekes hym grauntid, gruchet thai nought’).
- 812 **arrayed**: here not ‘adorned’ (Anderson and A&W), but ‘appointed, provided with amenities such as well-stocked kitchens’: cf. ‘Hem lakked no vitaille that myghte hem plese. So well arrayed hous as ther was oon Aurelius ... saugh nevere noon’ (*CT* V.1186–8).
- 819 **threfte**: MS *prefte* has been assumed to be a form of *perfe* [unleavened] (cf. 635), on the basis of Genesis 19:3, which refers to unleavened bread served to the heavenly guests. But the poet has replaced that detail with a different episode concerning the salt which is given to the angels in defiance of a ban by Lot on any **salt** or **sour** ingredient (820), not specifically in the bread (to

which the epithet *therf* would apply), but in *whatever* is served (**what thing so ye make**). Moreover, *MED* records no other form of *therf* in *-t* or with metathesis of *er*; **threfte** is, on the other hand, a recorded form of the adjective *thriffti*, and a form phonologically plausible in this MS (see nn. to 384 and G 1769). Used in this context in the sense of ‘well made, suitable, proper’ (*MED* *thriffti* (d)), that adjective is here both formally and semantically more plausible than *therf*.

- 821–8 Attempts to give some moral logic to the transformation of Lot’s wife into a pillar of salt had early led to Jewish stories involving her and salt at the meal served to the angels: cf. the gloss on Genesis 19:26 in Nicolas of Lyra’s *Postilla*: ‘Dicunt autem hebraei quod hoc fuit quia nocte precedenti peccaverat in sale: ut sic poena corresponderet peccato’ [and the Jews say it was due to the fact that she had acted wrongly with the salt the night before, so that the punishment might correspond with the sin]. None of those stories (on which see Emerson 1915) involve disobedience to a prohibition by Lot, which must have been either a later modification the poet encountered somewhere or his own rationalization of a gloss such as Nicolas’s.
- 821 We follow Anderson and A&W in taking **wroth** as past tense of *wrythen* [turn, twist] (cf. G 1200), rather than a form of *wrought*, as *MED* assumes, since all its other examples of *wroth* = ‘wrought’ come from East Anglian texts. **hit wroth to dispite** is evidently a variant (prompted by alliterative needs) of the expression (cited by Anderson) *nimmen to despit* [take amiss], which can appear with a different verb and/or preposition (*receyven for despit*, *taken in despit*): see *MED* *despit* 4(a).
- 827 **skelt hem in scorne**: *skelten* is recorded only in this poem (see 1186, 1206, 1554) and at *StE* 278. On those other occasions it is an intransitive verb of motion. Its precise sense here is unclear. The b-verse (**that wel her skylle knewen**) indicates that the deception is as transparent to the angels as was Sarah’s surreptitious laughter to God (661–70).
- 831 **til thay waschen hade**: hand washing took place both before the meal (see G 72, 887) and (as here) after it: cf. ‘Then bryng in the water in all wyse before the lorde as they dede byfore mete’ (*Fifteenth-Century Courtesy Book* 14). The ceremony played an important part in that protocol governing meals which was central to notions of courtesy.
- 832 Dining tables consisted of **tables** [boards] resting on **trestes** [trestles]. They were not permanently in position, but were assembled specifically for meals (see G 884, 1648) and disassembled afterwards.

- 833–9 *But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter* (Genesis 19:4).
- 839 **kene klubbess**: for *kene* (obviously in the sense of ‘formidable, destructive’ rather than ‘sharp’) applied to a club, cf. ‘he caughte hym a clubb ... He walde hafe kyllede the kynge with his kene wapen’ (MA 1105–6).
- 840–44 *And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them* (Genesis 19:5).
- 845–8 These lines have no equivalent in the Bible.
- 845 **sputen**: not past tense ‘uttered’ (A&W) but present tense ‘dispute’. The Sodomites are arguing a case, claiming a right to the young men on the grounds of *custom* (**assyse**, 844, **costoum**, 851), which often had legal status in the Middle Ages.
- 846 **yestande sorwe**: *yeast* occurs nowhere else as a verb. Alliterative requirements apparently prompted this graphic variation on the **frothande fylthe** of 1721. As Gollancz suggests, **sorwe** here and at Pa 275 may well bear a sense influenced by ON *saurr* [dirt]: i.e. ‘nasty matter, muckiness’.
- 847 **wynd and the weder** (cf. 444): a traditional collocation; see Oakden 1935: 310.
- 848 **brych**: usually interpreted as having the sense ‘breach, sin, iniquity’, but the context clearly requires some noun for disgusting matter that would be consistent with **fylthe**, **yestande** and **stynkes** (845–7). Although ‘vomit’ is not recorded as a sense of the word *breach*, cognate words do occur with such or similar reference: cf. OE *bræc* [phlegm, mucus, catarrh] and the ME verbs *braken* and *brakelen* [vomit] and Pa 340. Whatever the sense of **brych**, **upbraides** almost certainly has the sense (not otherwise recorded before the sixteenth century) ‘eruct, vomit’: see OED *upbraid* 6 and *upbraiding* 3.
- 849–58 The Bible has only *And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door* [*ostium*] *after him* (Genesis 19:6).
- 849 **glyfte ... glosed**: both verbs are associated with reactions to what is alarmingly or distressingly unexpected; cf. Arthur on discovering the body of Gawain in *Morte Arthure*: ‘Than gliftis the gud kynge and glopyns in herte’ (3949).
- 855 **wonded for no wothe**: **for** is not in the MS, but the verb in this sense is not elsewhere transitive and is regularly construed with *for*: cf. ‘For wothe that thou ne wonde’ (G 488), ‘I schuld not wonde For wo’ (Pe 153–4).
- 859–64 Based on Genesis 19:7 (*And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly*), a verse similarly expanded in *Histoire ancienne*

152: 'Loth qui bien conoissoit lor malaventures les comensa a chastoier [cf. **chaste**: 860] e a dire qu'il laissassent ester lor folie e fussent prodome e chaste' [Lot who knew their wicked deeds began to rebuke them and to tell them that they should leave their folly and be respectable men and chaste].

865–72 *Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man* [virum]; *let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing* (Genesis 19:8). Although Lot's offer of his two daughters made some medieval and many modern commentators uncomfortable (A&W feel obliged to say that the poet may not endorse it), Lot's words are referred to with approbation at 859–60, and the added material concerning his daughters' attractions and the pleasures of sex with women (868–72) in fact echoes God's own eulogy of the joys of heterosexual intercourse at 697–708. Biblical poems offer parallels: 'Virginitas in flore tumet, jam dedita messi, / digna cupido viris, tulerit quam vestra voluptas' [their virginity has flowered into bloom; it is ready for the harvest and an object worthy of desire for men. Let your passion take it] (*Carmen de Sodoma* 53–4).

867 **maydenes unmarde**: the collocation was common; cf. 'a mayde unmarred, that never man touched' (*SJ* 105).

869 **to manne**: because the noun is elsewhere spelled *man* or *mon*, Anderson assumes a verb and glosses 'be manned, be mastered'. But this involves stretching the normal ME sense of the verb ('to provide with men, to garrison', etc), and the spelling is easily explicable: obsolescent *-e* for dative case often occurs in this MS at line ending in order to ensure the line-final unstressed syllable.

871 **tayt** occurs with a variety of very dissimilar and somewhat elusive meanings; the context here suggests a sense similar to that in which it is used in *Sir Gawain* of the carcasses of 'ful tayt bestes' (1377), i.e. 'tidy in body, well grown'.

873–80 *And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door* (Genesis 19:9).

875–6 The Vulgate, which differs a little from the AV, has *Ingressus es, inquit, ut advena* [you have come here, they say, as a stranger]. Genesis 13:12 describes how Lot settles in Sodom after leaving his home country with Abraham (Genesis 12:1–5).

879 **umbe his eres**: Anderson seems correct in assuming the same sense as in the modern expression 'the house fell about his ears', i.e. 'close around him', even though the idiom is not otherwise

recorded before the seventeenth century.

- 881–4 **But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door** (Genesis 19:10).
- 882 **him**: Anderson retains MS *hem*, assuming it to refer to Lot and the Sodomites; but the same scribal error occurs at 915.
- 883 **heryed**: MS *horyed* does not mean ‘hurried’ (Anderson and A&W), a verb which is post-medieval, but ‘pulled, drew’: see *MED* *herien*² 3(b), and cf. *Pa* 178, where the same collocation of **heryed** and **hent** occurs. For the spelling with *o*, cf. *Cursor G* 1446, *horud* (var. *heried*, *harid*, *harwede*). The Vulgate has *et introduxerunt ad se Lot*.
- 884 **stone-hard**: the simile *hard as stone* was common (Whiting S763), but the phrase *stone-hard* occurs elsewhere (Whiting S763a) only in the sense ‘obdurate, merciless’. The poet has combined the sense of the former with the form of the latter.
- 885–8 **And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door** (Genesis 19:11).
- 885 **blw a buffet**: glossed in *MED* (sv *buffet*) as ‘blew a blast of trumpets’, and (sv *blouen*) as ‘struck a blow’, which assumes an otherwise unattested sense of *blouen*, and by Anderson and A&W as ‘blew a blast (of wind)’, which assumes a sense of **buffet** not otherwise recorded in ME or in OF. Vulgate *percusserunt* would suggest that **buffet** has its normal sense of ‘blow = hit’. However, since the blow is magical, the poet has coupled it with a verb that reflects his assumption that the blow was delivered in a way that supernatural beings were popularly supposed to use when visiting blindness on humans: cf. ‘And [the fairy Tryamour] blew on her swych a breth That never eft myght sche se’ (*Sir Launfal* 1007–8).
- 886 **blynde as Bayard**: the association between **Bayard** (a popular nickname for a workhorse) with blindness and unruliness was proverbial (cf. Whiting B71). The unheroic register of the simile is exploited also in Chaucer’s *Troilus* (I.218) and Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* (VI.1280–2); with the present line cf. ‘Bot al blustyrne furth unblest as bayard the blynd’ (Audelay 44/952; cf. *PP* B.5.514).
- 887 **lysoun** is not attested elsewhere, and, since the b-verse is unmetrical (having two long dips), may be a scribal error. Emendation of **any lysoun** to *a lysour* (‘strip, border or shred of cloth’, used here in the sense of ‘outside edge’ or perhaps ‘shred, trace’) would be one possibility; *an ynlate* [entrance], corresponding to Vulgate *ostium*, would be another.
- 888 **nyteled** occurs only here. Anderson cites *Old English Homilies* 73,

‘Nutelnesse leteth the mannes shrifte the ne wot nevre hwanne he sinegeth’, where *nutelnesse* clearly means ‘ignorance’ (cf. *Old English Homilies* 71, where the same word translates Latin *ignorancia*) and is speculatively derived in *OED* from *ne* + *witol* [knowing]. Whether **nytelede** represents a cognate verb, and if so what its sense is in the present context, is not clear: ‘went without knowing where, stumbled about’?

889–92 The lines have no equivalent in the Vulgate. The dramatic irony (and the collocation of **rest** and **reche**) finds a parallel in the poet’s comment at 1765–6 on Belshazzar, who is likewise unaware that the present night will be his last: ‘Baltazar to his bed with blisse was kayred: *Reche* the *rest* as him lyst, he ros never thereafter.’

890 **rotheled**: the verb (a separate one from that represented by **rotheled** at 59) occurs only here. *MED* compares ModE dialectal *rodeling* [helpless, tottering] and Middle Dutch *roden* [wander, roam].

893–945 *And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord has sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said [dicentes], Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord: Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die. Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither;*

for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar (Genesis 19:12–22). The poet has made additions and omissions and has reorganized the material. He has, in particular, compressed into one the three separate exhortations of the angels.

- 893 **RUDDON** (along with **rothun** at 1009) occurs only in this text. It is probably related to ME *ruden* [become red]; cf. the cognate **rudede** at G 1695 and **rudnyng** at *Pa* 139, likewise used of, respectively, dawn and the sky.
- 895 **ruthen**: the verb occurs only in *Cleanness* (here and at 1208) and *Sir Gawain* (1558).
- 896 **glopnedly**: the expressive verb *glopen* (see 849 and G 2461) is well attested in northern texts, but the adverb occurs only here.
- 900 **that thou thy lif save** (MS *huve*): the Vulgate has *Salva animam tuam* (Genesis 19:17).
- 903 **before your face**: i.e. ‘ahead’; cf. ‘forthwyth my face’ [before my mind’s eye] (304).
- 907 **tyne this toun**: cf. ‘If thou tynes that toun’ (775). **traythly** [grievously] occurs only here and at 1137. It appears to be from ON *tregða* [reluctance, difficulty], perhaps influenced by ME *trei* [affliction].
- 913–18 A significant departure from Genesis 19:18–19 (***And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord ... I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die***). That there is no hiding from God is a recurrent theme in both *Patience* and *Cleanness* (see 581–90 and n.). The alteration also avoids a potential contradiction: Zoar (**Segor**: 926), to which Lot flees, is represented by the poet (though not by the Bible) as a mountain resort (see n. to 927).
- 914 **hit me felle**: MS *I me fele* has not been convincingly explained. A&W assume *MED felen* *v*² [hide] and see the line as meaning ‘if I were to conceal myself as far as I could flee on foot’, which gives puzzling sense, especially in view of 915. Anderson assumes *felen* *v*³ (a) [advance], but the two citations in *MED* for that sense are suspect (see Smithers’s n. to *Havelok* 67).
- 915–17 **How schuld I hyde me ... To crepe**: where an auxiliary verb like **schuld** was followed by two infinitives, the second was preceded by *to*: cf. *Pe* 1072–3.
- 915 MS *hem* for **Him** is the same error as also occurs at 882 and 889, and MS *kynned* seems to be an error for **kynded** [kindled], since the verb *kinnen* [conceive or bear a child] is nowhere else recorded in the extended sense ‘arouse, awake’; *kinden* was a rarer equivalent of *MED kindelen*¹, which could be used metaphorically of the kindling of wrath, etc, and the kindling of a

fire of wrath (cf. 916) is precisely what present context requires.

919 **The freke** (i.e. one of the angels): the Vulgate contains a similar shift from plural speakers (*dicentes*, Genesis 19:15; cf. ‘*Thay comaunded*’: 898) to a singular one (*Dixitque ad eum*, Genesis 19:21), though the biblical equivalent to lines 919–20 is actually spoken by Lot in the Vulgate (see Genesis 29:19, cited in n. to 893–945).

924 **em**: MS *eme* has been wrongly ‘corrected’ by a second hand to the non-alliterating *brother*; see nn. to 772, 1015.

927 **on a rounde hille**: the Bible does not say that Segor is on a hill; on the contrary, the implication of Lot’s words from Genesis 19:19 (*I cannot escape to the mountain*) and of Genesis 19:30 (*And Lot went up out of Zoar* [*Ascenditque Lot de Segor*], *and dwelt in the mountain*) seems to be that Zoar is low-lying. But the topography assumed by the poet has parallels elsewhere: cf. *Metrical Paraphrase* 615 (‘a hyll syd, that sogor hyght’) and Mandeville, *Bodley Version* 63 (‘Segor was sauid at the preyer of Loth, for hit stod upon an hey hil’).

940 **cities athel fyve**: i.e. Segor and the four cities listed in 956–8 (Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim).

942 **Prechande hem the peril**: with the use of *preche* here, cf. ‘Thus preched he them by processe playn qwat care suld come’ (*Metrical Paraphrase* 5005).

942–3 The absence of inverted commas in medieval script meant that the boundaries between direct and indirect speech were more fluid, and the one could slip easily into the other; cf. 898–9.

943 **taken in the tech**: cf. ‘tan in tech of a faute’ (*G* 2488).

944 **bowe now by bote**: MS *bowe now bi bot* has been variously explained. Anderson’s ‘go quickly’ is based on OF *a bot*, *de bot*, not recorded in English; nor did the alliterative metre permit alliteration on the same word in the same part of speech in the same sense (cf. **bowes** in the b-verse). **bowe** in the a-verse would therefore appear to mean ‘obey’. A&W translate ‘obey according to the commandment’, but **bowe** = ‘obey’ is elsewhere regularly followed by *to*, and *bode* is nowhere recorded in the form *bot*: contrast ‘bowed to his bode’ at *Pa* 56. We therefore follow Menner in assuming **bote** = ‘boot’ [salvation, safety], though the phrase **by bote** is not attested.

945 **kayren hem con**: efforts to explain MS *kayre ne con* have been unpersuasive, as periphrastic **con** cannot normally occur with a negative. Reflexive forms of *kayre*, on the other hand, are well attested, and the verse as emended would restore to **con** the ingressive and intensifying force which it often has and which is appropriate here. For an a-verse similar in metrical-grammatical

shape, cf. 'And he conveyen Him con' (768).

- 946 **The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar** (Genesis 19:23). The compound **heven-glem** occurs only here; cf. **day-glem** (*Pe* 1094), which is also a nonce word.
- 947–78 As with the Flood (see 370–402 and n.), the poet has considerably expanded the account of the cataclysm that occurs in the Bible, which has only **Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground** (Genesis 19:24–5).
- 948–50 With this personification of the 'wroth' and 'wrestling' winds, compare the winds God likewise **calles** upon at *Pa* 131–2 and 141, and see n. to *Pa* 132–6; cf. also *G* 525 ('Wroth wynd of the welkyn wrasteles with the sunne'). According to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 1.52–68, the winds, innately strifeful, were separated to the four different quarters of the globe, from which, **flytande** [arguing, contending], they here depart. Cf. *Metamorphoses* XI.489–90: 'the warring winds From every quarter hurl their huge attack' [*omnique e parte feroces / bella gerunt venti*].
- 948 **waken wederes so wylde**: cf. 'Bot wylde wederes of the worlde wakened thereoute' (*G* 2000).
- 951 **Cloudes clustered bitwene**: cf. 'Mony clustered cloude' (367). **torres**: probably 'towering heaps of cloud' (see n. to *Pe* 875).
- 952 The alliterating term **thunder-thrast** [thunderbolt] occurs also at *WA* 554: 'Thonere-thrastis ware thra, thristid the welkyn.' Thunder and lightning were assumed to be caused by violent gusts of wind (cf. 948–50) tearing their way through thick clouds (Isidore XIII.viii).
- 953 **rueled** [?fell fast]: the verb (apparently from OF *roeler* [roll]) occurs only here. On **ridlande**, another word apparently from OF and occurring only in this MS, see n. to *Pa* 254.
- 954 **soufre** replaces the expected *snow* to which, in the context of weather, the term *flake* (then as now) elsewhere always refers.
- 957 **Gorde** is from *girden*, a verb often used of knights or armies charging or moving to attack persons or regions (*MED girden* v² 3(a)); the verb semi-personifies the brimstone storm as actively targeting the city, as does the metaphor of the hunt at 961.
- 958 **Abdama and Syboym – these cities all foure**: cf. 940 and n. The names of these other cities are given in Genesis 14:2 and Deuteronomy 29:23 and provide further evidence of a poet who knew the Bible well enough to bring other passages to bear upon the one he was currently translating.

- 959 **birolled** occurs only here, and presumably picks up **rued** (953). **rosted** and **brenned** form a striking apparent contradiction with **rayn**, and show a poet keenly responsive to the acidly sulphurous nature of this particular storm (954).
- 961–3 Both the storm from above and the splitting earth below are personified to suggest that the cities are the prey of intentional forces rather than the casualties of a natural catastrophe. With the metaphor of the **houndes of heven** used of the storm may be compared the notion of ‘Gabriel’s *raches* [hounds]’, a pack of dogs which were believed to fly through the sky, foreboding imminent disaster (see Gollancz and *Catholicon Anglicum* 147). The opening up of the earth is presented as a personified Hell bursting open his confining gates (with **barres ... he braste up** cf. ‘brestes up the yates’ at 1263) to seize the prey he hears the hounds pursuing; Hell as a character would have been familiar to the poet’s audience from the dialogue between Satan and a personified Infernus in the Gospel of Nicodemus (192–5), which Langland draws on in *PP* B.18.265: ‘Than sikede Sathan, and seide to Helle ...’
- 966 The simile comparing the disintegration of the cliffs with the fragmentation of a book is startlingly original. The collocation of **lause** (regularized from MS *lauce*, which must represent the verb *lausen* [loosen], not *lancen* [spring]: see n. to *G* 526) and **leves** occurs less unpredictably at *G* 526 (‘The leves lausen fro the lynde’).
- 967 **blende**: usually read as past tense of *blenden* [mingle] and glossed ‘spread’, but no comparable usage is recorded of that verb. We have taken it as past of *blinnen* [cease]; though the verb does not occur elsewhere spelled with *e*, lowering of *i* to *e* is not uncommon in this MS (see n. to 384), and **blende** would appear to be a variant of the recorded past tense form *blind(e)*.
- 969–72 The lines recall the panic and terror occasioned by the Flood at 373ff. Both passages are independent of the Vulgate.
- 971–2 With **yomerly yarm of yellyng**, cf. ‘Yauland yamerly with many loude yell’ (*Awntyrs* 86); and with **clatered the cloudes** (a collocation which occurs in descriptions of storms: see Oakden 1935: 275), cf. e.g. ‘Cloudes ... clatird unfaire’ (*WA* 555); existing collocations have, however, here been combined to distinctive effect, as these **cloudes clater** [resound] with the echo of the **yellyng**.
- 976 **Trynande aye a high trot**: the verb is from the word-hoard of alliterative poetry, as is the expression itself, which could be adapted to alliterative needs: cf. ‘we trinet a trot’ (*Pistel of Susan* 225), ‘Flyngande on a faste trott’ (*MA* 2757).

- 977 **luly-white** (proverbial: see Whiting L279) ... **lefly**: cf 'Lovulich and lilie-whit' (*Pistel of Susan* 16).
- 979–84 **But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt** (Genesis 19:26).
- 981 **over her lyfte schulder**: as Bateson 1923 notes, looking over the left shoulder is a common folkloric motif that heralds grief; cf. 'She looked over her left shoulder, And tears did blind her ee. But she looked over her right shoulder, And a blythe sight saw she' (*Lord William*, stanza 15). In 'Louerd asse thou ard on God', God sarcastically asks Satan to 'Loke ovir thine luft sculdere' (33) before plunging him into Hell. The left side in general had negative connotations (cf. *G* 2487–8).
- 984 **and so ho yet standes**: cf. Wisdom 10:7: 'and a disbelieving soul hath a memorial there, a pillar of salt still standing'. The continued existence of this salt pillar is reported by many earlier writers (see n. to 999–1000), including Mandeville (*Livre* 227) and Josephus, who claims to have seen it with his own eyes (*Antiquitates* 150).
- 985 **samen-feres**: the expression occurs only here.
- 987–8 This thanksgiving is not in the Vulgate, but cf. *Pa* 237–40 ('There was lovyng on loft ...'). *StE* 349 ('Then was lovyng oure Lord wyth loves uphalden') indicates that **loves** is plural of *MED* *love* *n*³ [palm, hand], not *lof* *n*¹ [praise].
- 990–91 **that little town**: i.e. Segor, which is referred to as a small town at Genesis 19:20 (and whose name, on the basis of the same verse, was usually assumed to mean 'littleness'): *est civitas haec juxta ... parva* [the city, 'small', is near by] ... *numquid non modica est* [is it not 'little']? The poet had evidently read somewhere that the inhabitants of the town fled from it in terror and died in the very catastrophe they were attempting to escape (though the town itself was saved for Lot's sake: cf. 921–2 and see n. to 1015), or himself assumed that to be the case (since God has promised to save the town, not the citizens, who were as guilty as those of the other four cities). He emphasizes in the following lines (992–3) that nothing escaped the catastrophe except the town itself and the three persons that it now contained (Lot and his two daughters).
- 991 **malscrande**: the verb outside this MS means 'to wander aimlessly' or 'to bewilder'. But here and at *Pa* 255, where Jonah sits in the whale 'malskred in drede', it seems to have a much stronger meaning, referring to the 'confounding' effects of some terrifyingly out-of-the-ordinary phenomenon.
- 992 **that sat on a lawe**: see n. to 927.
- 993 The a-verse lacks a second alliterating word; Gollancz supplies

lent after **thereinne**.

996 **mistrauthe**: this characterization of the disobedience of Lot's wife aligns her with Satan, who **forsoke** his **Soverayn** (210), **Adam inobedyent** (237) and the lapsed Jews later **founden untrue** in their **fyath** (1161) – who form a subset of unfaithful servants whom God punishes with harshness, but not with the uncontrollable rage that only *filth* can arouse in Him (197–204).

997–9 See n. to 821–8.

999–1000 Cf. 'In a salt stan men seis hir stand That bestes likes o that land' (*Cursor* 2855–6). The motif was a common one, and can be found also in e.g. Prudentius 749–53, and cf. Malkaraume, *Bible* 475–7: 'Et sa fanme ... les bestes de cel leu Leschent tant com li mons durra' [and his wife ... is licked by the animals of that place for as long as the world will last]. The pillar was a tourist attraction for pilgrims, who found Lot's wife standing, miraculously undiminished 'ab animalibus lingendo [by the licking of the animals], in ipso statu, in quo fuit [in exactly the same shape as she was originally]' (*Itinera Hierosolymitana* 169).

1001–12 **And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord: And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace** (Genesis 19:27–8).

1007 **aparaunt to Paradise**: Anderson points out that **aparaunt** (wrongly glossed 'heir apparent' in *MED*) in fact derives from OF *s'aparar* [be comparable with]. The poet is remembering Genesis 13:10, where the site of Sodom and Gomorrah is said to be **even as the garden of the Lord** [*sicut paradisus Domini*]. The verb **planted** may have been suggested by Genesis 2:8, *Plantaverat autem Dominus Deus paradisum voluptatis* [the Lord God planted a garden of delight].

1009 **rothun** occurs only here. Anderson and *MED* relate it to ON *roðmi* [redness] and Anderson represents the word as *rothun* (the MS has the bar representing a nasal over *u*). It may or may not be related to *ruddon* at 893, where context and relation to other *rud*-words clearly indicate the sense 'redness' (see n. to 893), a meaning that is not especially obvious here.

1013–1156 These remaining lines of section II of the poem are independent of Genesis 19.

1015–48 Similar descriptions of the Dead Sea and the properties of the fruit growing near it can be found both in biblical versifications (*Carmen de Sodoma* 182–225, *Cursor* 2861–90) and in encyclopaedic works (e.g. Isidore XIII.xix, Trevisa, *Properties* I, 660–61). The ultimate source is the Bible: **the whole land thereof**

is brimstone, and salt, and burning ... it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah (Deuteronomy 29:23); ... the fire that descended out of heaven on Pentapolis [the five cities]. To whose wickedness a smoking fire still witnesseth, and plants bearing fair fruit that cometh not to ripeness (Wisdom 10:6–7). A more proximate source is Josephus, who describes the unnatural qualities of the Dead Sea in *Wars of the Jews* IV.viii.4. The poet used this description at the least indirectly through the French insular version of *Mandeville's Travels*, which is certainly his major source here. Specific parallels between *Cleanness* and *Mandeville* are indicated in the notes below. More broadly, both texts make the same general moral point illustrated by the same particulars: the present landscape is an enduring memorial to the past sin of Sodomy, and thus the land is barren; the sea stinks and behaves unnaturally; and the fruit, while looking appealing from the outside, is corrupt inside.

- 1015 **fyve** has been erased by a second scribe in the MS and replaced with *faure* (see n. to 924 for a similar mistaken ‘correction’). It was common to speak of the destruction of all *five* cities of the plain (cf. 940), for, even though Segor was not at this point destroyed (as the poet reminds us at 992; cf. 922), God did destroy it later through an earthquake (thus Peter Comestor, col. 1101, and Bacon I, 337–8) after Lot had fled from it. Especially relevant is *Mandeville*, *Livre* 227, the poet’s probable source for the Dead Sea description: ‘En cel mer *fondirent* [cf. **founded**: 1014] les V citez par irour [var. *vengeaunce*; cf. **vengaunce**: 1013] de Dieu’ [in that sea the five cities were engulfed through God’s anger].
- 1018 **stynkande stanc**: cf. ‘Thar thaa five cities war won to be [cf. C 1015] / es noght now bot a stinkand see’ (*Cursor* 2861–2), ‘autres [appelent cel mer] le flum puaunt, qar le eawe est orde et puante’ [others call that sea the stinking stream, because the water is foul and stinking] (*Mandeville*, *Livre* 227).
- 1019 **smelle** (MS *synne*, retained by Anderson and Vantuono): ‘The scribe probably miswrote *synne* because he had just written it in the line before. The poet elsewhere usually alliterates *sm* only with itself, and not with simple *s* ... Cf. 461’ (Menner).
- 1022 **bitter as the galle**: proverbial. See Whiting G8.
- 1023 Cf. ‘Na livand thing mai tharin duell’ (*Cursor* 2864). This is in apparent contradiction with 1031–2. The poet was probably combining two different traditions.
- 1024–6 Cf. ‘et qy metteroit fer dedeinz il noeroit par dessure. Et qy metteroit une plume dedeinz, elle iroit au founs [cf. **to founs**:

1026]. Et ces sont choses contre nature' [if you put any iron in it will float to the top. And if you put a feather in, it will sink to the bottom. And these are things against nature] (Mandeville, *Livre* 226).

- 1029–32 Cf. 'ne homme ne beste qe ad en luy vie ne poroit morir en cel mer, et ceo ad esté prové mointe foiz qe home jectoit dedeinz gentz qe avoient deservy mort et demorroient III jours ou IIII, mes ils ne poaient morir, qar elle ne retient nulle chose qu ait en luy vie' [neither living man nor beast could die in that sea, and that has been proved on the many occasions when people deserving death have been thrown therein and stayed there for three or four days; yet they could not die, because it absorbs nothing that has life in it] (Mandeville, *Livre* 226).
- 1031 **losyng**: glossed 'perdition' in *MED*, but the word is not elsewhere used in that sense. Since *lose* and *be lost* were often used to mean 'perish' (see *losen* v² 4b and 6; cf. *G* 675), it looks as if the poet is pointing to the living death here involved, in which **losyng** [being lost from life and the world] is, for once, not synonymous with suffering **deth** (1032).
- 1034 **corsyes** is an improvised or at least rare shortened form (of *corrosies*), not otherwise recorded in *MED*, used to create wordplay with **corsed** (1033).
- 1035 **alum and alkaran**: cf. 'Entour celle mer croist moult d'alun et d'alketran [var. *alkoran*, *alkaram*]' (Mandeville, *Livre* 225).
- 1037–8 Cf. 'et jecte fors del eawe une chose qe homme appelle aspalt, aussy grosses pieces come un chival' [and out of that water is thrown something called asphalt, in pieces as large as a horse] (Mandeville, *Livre* 226). Josephus (*Antiquities* IV.viii.4) also refers to 'black globs of bitumen ... in their shape and size resembling decapitated bulls', and to the trade in these deposits of asphalt (not mentioned by Mandeville): 'The labourers on the lake row up to these and haul them into their boats ... It is useful ... also for the healing of the body, forming an ingredient in many medicines.' This trade is also mentioned in *Carmen de Sodoma* 150–52, which refers to the substance as being greasy (*pingue*: cf. **wax-lokes** [?wax-like lumps], a term not otherwise recorded in *ME*) and as forming a skin of scum or foam (*spumisque cutis*: cf. **spumande**), and asphalt is similarly defined in the medical treatise *Cyurgie of Guy de Chauliac* as 'hardened scume [Sloane MS: 'fome indured'] that is founden in the Dede See ... it heleth ulcers' (618).
- 1041 **kynde** has been supplied (following Gollancz). The b-verse in the MS (*of traytours*) is unmetrical.
- 1044 **apple-garnade** occurs only here, **apple** being a translation, for

alliterative purposes, of *pome* in *pome-garnade*.

- 1047 **bruised**: not 'bruised' (< OE *brysan*), as Anderson and A&W gloss the word, but 'broken, smashed' (< OF *brisier*, *bruissier*, AN *bruser*). Cf. 'si croissent arbes delez qe portent pommes très beles et de bele color a regarder et toutes maures par semblant, mes qy les *brisera* [var. *brusera*] ou trenchera par my, il ne trovera dedeinz qe cendres' [and trees grow nearby carrying very beautiful apples fine to behold and looking all ripe, but if anyone breaks them or slices them in two, he will only find ashes therein] (Mandeville, *Buke* 226).
- 1057 **compas** [circumference, bounded area] and **clene** [perfectly wrought] apply punningly to both the rose as flower and Rose as literary work. This aesthetic sense of **clene** is prominent in this last third of the poem, in which it is especially applied to the artistic beauty of the temple vessels defiled by Belshazzar (1287, 1382, 1455, 1458).
- 1059–67 The passage from *Roman de la rose* here alluded to is that in which Ami [Friend] advises the lover to recommend himself to the lady by adopting her own likes and dislikes, as these are evident in the demeanour of Bel Accueil [that aspect of her disposed to give 'Fair Welcome']: 'De bel acueil vous prenez garde, Par quel semblant il vous regarde [take note of Bel Accueil, and with what expression he looks at you: 7721–22; cf. C 1059–60] ... Conformez vous a sa maniere [conform yourself to his manner: 7724; cf. C 1067] ... De lui ensuivre vous penez [take pains to follow him in demeanour: 7730; cf. C 1062] ... Briement, faites en quelque place Quanque vous pensez que li place. S'ainsi le faites, n'en doutez, Ja n'en serez ariers boutez [briefly, do in every place whatever you think is pleasing to him. If you do this, do not fear: you will certainly never be rebuffed: 7791–94; cf. C 1060–64].' This amorous policy is here wittily applied to the 'wooing' of God by 'conformity' (1067) to His nature. For a similar application of the same axiom of courtly love to moral-spiritual imitation of (or 'likeness' (1064) to) a virtuous model, cf. 'If we these ladies wolde lovy in lyknyng of thewes' (*Pa* 30).
- 1065 **drury**: used in courtly and romantic contexts of 'love'. The expression **dele drury** occurs also of Morgan's affair with Merlin in *Sir Gawain*: 'ho has dalt drury ful dere sumtyme With that conable clerk' (2449–50). The application to God of this and other expressions of romantic love was not uncommon.
- 1068 **polysed**: also used in *Sir Gawain* to indicate moral 'cleanness': 'I holde thee polysed of that plyght and pured as clene ...' [I consider you cleansed of that guilt, and purified as cleanly ...] (2393). The **perle** as an image of purity and perfection (here and

at 1117–32) is also reminiscent of *Pearl*.

1072 The general physical and moral senses of **clene** established by the poem are here supplemented by the specific sense ('chaste') in which the adjective was used of maidens and virgins (*MED clene* 2(b)) and perhaps also (in view of the imagery of 1071) by the related sense 'entire, unimpaired' (cf. *clene* 6(a)).

1075–6 **bos** could refer to either a manger or a stall, as could the Latin *praesepe* of which it is found as a gloss (*Promptorium Parvulorum* 41). Here the sense must be 'manger', since the stall is mentioned in the next line, and the passage traces in enlarging circles the cleansing effects of Christ on His environment: from the Virgin's womb (1072), to the crib and stall (1075–6), to the world itself (1099–1101). This gradual enlargement of perspective is paralleled by the comparisons of the **bos** [manger] to a **bour** [chamber in a mansion] and the **schepon** [cattle shed] to a **house**. **schroude** is probably past participle of *shroud* in its sense of 'drape, decorate' (*MED shrouden* 2), although **shroude house** is understood as a compound by A&W (following Anderson, who cites a nonce OE *scrudelshus* [vestry]) and glossed 'vestry, sanctuary'.

1081–8 The details surrounding the nativity scene – the singing of the angels around the crib, and the adoration of the ox and the ass – ultimately derive from the apocryphal Gospels and from the influence of Isaiah 1:3. For a ME analogue which mentions these and other details (e.g. Mary's clean and painless birth) see *Three Kings of Cologne* 52–4.

1093–1101 The paradoxical relation between 1093 and 1090, and between 1091–2 and Christ's 'touching' of the unclean sick, is explained by 1099 and 1101 (cf. 1092): God is still (as in the earlier parts of the poem) a deity unable to tolerate uncleanness in His vicinity, but in His Messianic manifestation He transmutes dirt to, rather than expelling it from, His cleanness.

1093–6 Cf. Christ's healing of the sick in Matthew 8–9 (and Luke 7), where the list begins with a *leprosus* (cf. **lepre**: 1094) and contains two instances (8:6, 9:2) of the *paralyticus* [man with palsy; cf. **parlatyk**: 1095]; the **lome** and the **blynde** (1094) also occur (9:27–31, Luke 7:22), together with two cases of the **dede** (1096) raised to life (Matthew 9:18, Luke 7:12–15). For the healing of a man with dropsy (*vir ... hydropicus*; cf. **ydropike**: 1096), see Luke 14:2–3.

1095 **Poysened** has no parallel in the canonical Gospels; but Christ promised to His faithful that no deadly drink or serpent would harm them (Mark 16:18), an immunity which is referred to elsewhere (*Sidrak* B 729–37, *John Evangelist* 220–32) and which

evidently could be extended to the ability to cure the effects of venom: 'venum he [St John] drank without wath; The poysoned m[e]n he raised rath That war dede of suche a drink' (*Cursor* 21055–7). **pined in fires** perhaps represents Peter's *febricitans* [feverish] mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14), who is cured by Christ, though *fire* as a medical term normally referred to inflammatory and/or skin conditions.

- 1096 Drye** obviously suggested itself as an alliterating opposite of the biblical **ydropike**, the two denoting diseases caused by respective deficiency and surplus of fluid (medieval diagnostics were based on the four bodily *humours* and the four elementary qualities of hot, cold, moist, dry).
- 1105–8** When the resurrected Christ appeared on the road to Emmaus to two of His disciples, He was recognized by them only when He later broke the bread at table (*cognoverunt eum in fractione panis*: Luke 24:35). As Menner notes, a passage in Towneley Play 28 (*Thomas of India*) suggests a distinctive 'cleanness of break' was deduced to have prompted the identification: 'Ihesu, Goddys son of heven At soper satt betweyn, Ther bred he brake as even As it cutt had beyn' (465–8).
- 1108 toles of Toulouse**: confusion with Toledo (famous for its blades) is, as Gollancz suggests, a possibility; cf. *Guy of Warwick* (2) 84, where *Toledo* in the French text figures as *Tholouse* in the English. But knives and razors were also among the specialties of the metal industry that flourished in Toulouse in the late fourteenth century (when Toulouse also became famous for its trade in luxury fabrics: **toulouse** figures at G 77 as the name of a choice cloth). See Breeze 1996.
- 1109 curious** had a range of meanings – relating to elaborate care, niceness and skill – very different from those it has today; in view of the previous quatrain, the primary sense here is probably 'neatly exact' (*MED curious* 1b). The alliterative and syntactic association with **clene** again anticipates the aesthetic application to fine craftsmanship both words have when used of the magnificent vessels (as e.g. at 1452–5).
- 1111 souly** appears only in this poem (here and at 168). It seems to have been borrowed from French *souillie* [soiled, dirty].
- 1111–16** There occurs here the first acknowledgement that spotlessness is not actually achievable by any (naturally flawed) mortal; and the wording of the Beatitude adopted as the text for the poem's theme (27–8) is here recalled (1112) in an interrogative mode that contrasts with the hitherto imperative stance taken up in the sections of exposition framing the various Old Testament narratives (e.g. 33, 165, 554). There also now

occurs the first indication of a method of divine purgation which does not involve obliteration or expulsion of the human source of pollution. The change in perspective is associated with a transition to the salvific logic of the New Testament and to the salvific purification available through the sacraments (specifically, confession and penance) of the Church of Christ.

- 1114 **molde** [earth, soil] was in verse often a synonym for ‘world’, especially in the tag **upon mold(e)** (see e.g. 708, 1656). In the present context, however, the semantic correspondence with **fenny** and **myre** (1113–14) makes the literal sense revelant: the point is that a ‘muddy’ state in this ‘earth-ly’ life is inevitable.
- 1117 **praysed is pris**: the glosses proposed by A&W (‘highly valued’) and Anderson (‘deemed precious’) make weak sense in context. **pris** here means ‘the best, the paragon’ (*MED pris* n¹ 7); cf. C 1614 and ‘Smaragdus is pris of alle grene stones’ (Trevisa, *Properties* II, 871).
- 1124 **while ho in pece lastes**: MS *pyese* has sometimes been emended to *pryse*, and the clause explained as ‘while she/it remains in esteem’ (contrasting with **uncheryst** at 1125). But it is a recorded form of *piece* (cf. MS *pyece* at *Pe* 192 and *pyse* at 229), which could mean ‘length of time’ (*MED pece* 7(d)); cf. ‘The wer [war] lasted sa long a pece ...’ (*Cursor* 7063) and AN *en piece* (‘for a long time’); and we understand the clause to mean ‘for as long as she lasts’.
- 1127 **wasch her with worschip, in wyne**: the antiseptic and cleansing qualities of wine were well known, for there are references to the use of it for cleaning wounds. In recommending it for cleaning pearls, the poet seems to be consulting, not lapidary tradition (in which the detail does not figure), but practical experience: alcohol has been used in modern times to restore the lustre of pearls (Emerson 1919: 511; Kunz and Stevenson 1908: 396). The alliteration with **worschip** implies that the use of a cleaning agent more expensive than water is also more respectfully appreciative of the special beauty and worth of the pearl.
- 1131 **polyce**: see n. to 1068. The expression ‘at the priest’ implies that the confessor (and the penance he assigns) is being offered, with some wit, as useful buffing material for spiritual ‘shine’.
- 1134 **parchemen schaven**: to prepare parchment (made from the skin of sheep or calves) for writing, it had to be stretched and all impurities had to be scraped off. A&W cite an extended comparison, in a twelfth-century sermon, between a good conscience and well-pumiced parchment.
- 1137 **traythly**: see n. to 907.

- 1141 **lastes hit likkes** has been variously interpreted. **likkes** is rendered 'tastes' by both Anderson and A&W, with **hit** (= the soul) as subject and **lastes** as object. But -s frequently occurs as a present plural inflexion in this corpus, and the soul appears here to be regarded as the prized *object* of a defilement or rapine (1142) that would cause anger and distress to its owner. The clause has here been understood to mean 'vices lick it': the image is designed to elicit the same reaction of angry disgust as would be provoked when a vessel dedicated to one's use is made unfit for that use by being licked or drunk from by some obviously unhygienic creature.
- 1144 This theological principle (that the defiled is worse than the uncleansed) occurs in canon law, and is at one point invoked by Andreas Capellanus: 'the punishment is all the keener if abuse disfigures the use of something sacred than if we follow an abuse which is customary' (*De Amore* 151; see also Kelly 1975: 256).

- 1145–52 The image of the soul purified through shrift as a ‘vessel’ consecrated to God both leads into, and gives a more general applicability to, the third Old Testament exemplum: Belshazzar’s desecration of the temple vessels. See pp. 88–9.
- 1145–6 The image of the soul as God’s ‘vessel’ (on which see Morse 1971 and 1978) has its biblical origin in a text also referred to (for very different purposes) by Chaucer’s Wife of Bath (CT III.95–104): *But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth ... If a man therefore purge himself ... he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use* (2 Timothy 2:20–21).
- 1154–6 The stark antithesis between the pious purity of Noah, Abraham and Lot, on the one hand, and the debauched communities around them, on the other, is now replaced by one between two kinds of sinner: the redeemable Nebuchadnezzar, who, despite his faults, can both awaken and show esteem (1313–20, 1643ff, 1701–8), and his unredeemably gross son Belshazzar (who fails to **cherisch** the vessels: 1154; cf. 1125).
- 1157–60 Daniel was one among the Jewish **gentryse** who were brought prisoner to Babylon after the sack of Jerusalem, an event referred to at the beginning of his Book (1:1–3) and in one of his visions (9:12–8). But the full story of the siege and conquest itself, to which the poem proceeds, was known to the poet, not from Daniel, but from elsewhere in the Bible: 2 Kings 24–5, 2 Chronicles 36, Jeremiah 52. These events are included in the poem, not only because the destruction of human habitations for sinful uncleanness (1173–6, 1225–32) is of obvious relevance, but also because the structural principle of contrast (between the preserved and the destroyed) is observed in this last part of the poem primarily in relation to the deeds and fates of Nebuchadnezzar (the sacker of Jerusalem and the temple) and Belshazzar.
- 1157 **dialokes** elsewhere refers to a specific literary form, a dialogue, which would not accurately describe the Book of Daniel, which consists of six chapters recounting, in the third person, Daniel’s life under three successive kings of Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and Darius), followed by six chapters written largely in the first person, describing the prophetic dreams he experienced over that period. Possibly the use of the word ‘dialogues’ with reference to the sacred and hagiographical tales in the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great (see *MED dialog* (a)) prompted a general sense of ‘record of historically true stories,

chronicles, accounts’.

- 1161 On the moral and religious degeneracy of the Jews prior to the sack of Jerusalem, see 2 Kings 24:9, 19; 2 Chronicles 36:15–16; Daniel 9:5–12.
- 1163 **halwed for His** (cf. 1139–48): following the poet’s warning against moral pollution of souls consecrated to God, the fate of the Jews forms a subsidiary and introductory exemplum – an exemplum in fact more strictly pertinent than the story of Belshazzar, whose acts relate only to the sacrilegious abuse of consecrated vessels (1145–52), not to the moral-spiritual backsliding that abuse was introduced to illustrate (for there is no sense in which Belshazzar was ever ‘saghtled and sakred’ to God (1139), as were the Jews, whom He had **halwed for His**).
- 1165–8 The Bible also interprets the conquest of the Jews and the sack of Jerusalem as a punishment for the transgressions of the Jews against their faith and its laws (2 Kings 24:2–3; 2 Chronicles 36:16–17; Daniel 9:11–12) – transgressions continued so long that they **wakened His wrath** (*donec ascenderet furor Domini*: 2 Chronicles 36:16).
- 1169 **Zedechyas**: Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar’s uncle, had been installed as a puppet king of Jerusalem by his nephew, after the previous conquest of Jerusalem by the latter (2 Kings 24:17–18). He then rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:20), though in this poem it is his breach of allegiance to his divine lord (1172) that precipitates his punishment at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar; for Zedekiah (1173–6), like his predecessors on the Jewish throne, ‘did that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord’ (Jeremiah 52:2; cf. 2 Kings 24:19, 2 Chronicles 36:12).
- 1173–6 **abominaciones, let lyght by, Forthy and wakened** are expressions prompted by the wording of 2 Chronicles 36:14–17, of which these lines are a paraphrase: following Zedekiah’s example, the leading Jews **transgressed very much after all the abominations** [*abominationes*] **of the heathen**, and attached very little weight to [*parvipendebant*] the rebukes delivered by the spokesmen of God; and **Therefore he brought upon them** [*Adduxit enim super eos*] **the king of the Chaldees** [Nebuchadnezzar]. In the poem (in which the equivalent verbs and pronouns are singular and relate to Zedekiah alone), the issue is personalized – to create a triad of kings punished, by loss of their kingdoms, for forgetting the overlord under whom they held them (1162, 1172): Zedekiah (1227–8), Nebuchadnezzar (1701–8), Belshazzar (1797–1802).
- 1176 **Nabugo de nozar**: this French-looking form in which Nebuchadnezzar’s name is always represented in the MS (see n. to 1226) not only makes it clear how the name fits into the

metre, where it provides two alliterating staves on *n* and thus a complete a-verse in itself (1176, 1218, etc), or a b-verse (1651), and permits shortening to **Nabugo** to allow for inclusion of other matter in the a-verse (1226, 1233), but also (at 1312) enables that name to span the two half lines (providing the second stave of the a-verse and the head stave of the b-verse) in a way no other spelling could easily convey.

1177–80 The Vulgate merely states that in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign Nebuchadnezzar and his forces laid siege to [*circumdederunt*] Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:1). The added details visualize Nebuchadnezzar's campaign in a manner that shows familiarity with biblical geography and nomenclature. Nebuchadnezzar would have proceeded west from Babylon (south of modern Baghdad) to **Palastyn** (1177), the name of the general area between the Mediterranean and the river Jordan, where his target is **Israel** (1179) and, more specifically, **Jerusalem**, the chief city of the Jews, situated in the province of **Judee** (1180). Israel and Judah were, at this period, technically two separate kingdoms, in the north and south respectively of Palestine. But the term *Israel* was also used in the Vulgate as an inclusive term (for the Jewish nation as a whole) in which the formally separate kingdom of Judah could be comprehended (e.g. Daniel 1:3, 6), and the word is so used by this poet both here and at 1293–4 (though he always correctly sites Jerusalem specifically in Judah: cf. *Pe* 922, 937).

1181–92 An elaboration of ***and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about*** (2 Kings 25:1, Jeremiah 52:4). The military details add liveliness and naturalize the biblical events into the traditions of alliterative verse – in which battles generally and sieges in particular, both modern and ancient (in poems such as *SJ* and *DT*), are a favoured topos, and in which realistic details on arms and tactics (cf. 1187, 1190) are often to be found.

1183 Jerusalem is likewise pictured in *SJ* as a well-fortified city hard to conquer: 'And this toured toun is tenful to wyne' (868).

1187 **on basteles wyse** indicates that each moveable siege-tower or **berfray** (which contained men and arms and was moved as close as possible to the walls) resembled in appearance and protective function a *bastel* or defensive turret projecting from a wall or tower of a city or castle-fort (cf. *G* 799). The use of the term *bastel* for a siege-engine itself (sometimes assumed to be the case here) seems to have been a later development which probably arose from such comparisons as the poet here makes.

1190 The **brutage** or 'brattice' was a defensive parapet erected in

times of siege as a timber extension to the upper wall (Warner 1968: 17).

- 1192 **two yere**: the siege lasted, according to the Vulgate, from the ninth to the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:1–2, Jeremiah 52:4–5).
- 1193–1200 An elaboration of *the famine [fames] prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land* (2 Kings 25:3; cf. Jeremiah 52:6).
- 1201–4 *and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden ... and the king went by the way toward the plain* (2 Kings 25:4; cf. Jeremiah 52:7).
- 1201–2 Medieval political theory required the king always to take, and act on, counsel on any important point (cf. G 361–6).
- 1205–11 Unparalleled in the Vulgate. Stylistically characteristic is the energy and expressiveness imparted by three unusual verbs. **atwappe** (1205) occurs only here and at G 1167 ('What wylde [beast] so atwaped wyes that schotten'); the verb, whose sense is plainly 'escape from', seems to be derived from *wap* [blow in gusts, whirl]. **lulted** (1207) is much the earliest occurrence of the verb *lilt* and here refers to horn or trumpet blasts that 'sounded out forcibly and shrilly', as in Douglas's *Aeneid*, where, with reference to the grisly horn-blast sent out by the Fury, 'Tartaream intendit vocem' is rendered 'A feyndlych hellis voce scho liltis schill' (VII.viii.88). **ruthed** (1208) is a verb (probably of Norse derivation) that occurs only in this corpus of poems, always in the context of a hurried arousal from bed (cf. 895, G 1558).
- 1212–16 *And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him* (2 Kings 25:5; cf. Jeremiah 52:8).
- 1215 **Caldee**: so spelled only at 1316 in the MS (which elsewhere gives *Calde*), but metre consistently requires a trisyllabic word.
- 1217–20 *So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him* (2 Kings 25:6; cf. Jeremiah 52:9).
- 1220–24 *And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes: he slew also the princes of Judah in Riblah. Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death* (Jeremiah 52:10–11; cf. 2 Kings 25:7).
- 1222 **holkked [dug] out**: a close equivalent of *effodit* [dug out] at 2 Kings 25:7 (*eruit* in Jeremiah 52:11).
- 1225–32 Unparalleled in the Vulgate. See n. to 1163.
- 1226 **Nabugo**: 'Nebuchadnezzar's name is always written as a French

name in the MS (*Nabugo de noȝar*), and here *Nabugo* is evidently thought of as a forename' (Anderson). Menner notes that *Nabugod* occurs twice in Gower's *Miroir de l'omme* (1887, 10338). The name also occurs in Gower's *Vox Clamantis* (VII.5). See also n. to 1176.

- 1231–2 India and Turkey were the lands which would have mustered the most numerous and formidable forces: Trevisa repeats 'wonders' of the 'might and multitude' of **Ynde** (*Properties* II, 770), and the armies of **Torkye** (which often referred to Asia Minor as a whole: see *MED Turki(e)* (a)) were associated, from crusading experience, with especial ferocity and savagery. Both Anderson and A&W take **her** as referring to the hypothesized belligerents; but the contextual emphasis plainly indicates the sense to be that, had God remained **frende** (1229) to the Jews, *their* harm would have been small even under attack from the combined forces of the most powerful nations of Asia.
- 1234 **tyrved**: an emendation (first suggested by Gollancz) for MS *tuyred* (of which no convincing sense has been made). The meaning 'overturned, brought to ground' (*MED terven* (a)) is appropriate.
- 1235–8 *And in the fifth month ... came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard [princeps exercitus; princeps militiae], a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem* (2 Kings 25:8; Jeremiah 52:12).
- 1239–44 The Vulgate has nothing equivalent.
- 1245–52 Elaborating 2 Chronicles 36:17: *Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age.*
- 1248 **Bathed ... blod ... brayn spylled**: the phrasing and alliterative collocations are common in accounts of slaughter: cf. *CT* I.2006; *Otuel and Roland* 1646 ('Thay schedde here brayn and blode'); *WA* 1542, *MS A* ('Spedely with spry[n]galdis spilt thaire braynes').
- 1253–60 *And them that escaped from the sword carried he [Nebuchadnezzar] away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia* (2 Chronicles 36:20).
- 1253 For the collocation of *swallow* (= devour, destroy: *MED swolwen* 2(d)) with *sword*, cf. 1268.
- 1254–5 The rebel Hubert de Burgh was led naked, shackled to a horse, to the Tower of London, in the reign of Henry II (Warner 1968: 47). And in Chrétien's *Erec*, a naked prisoner with his feet bound under the horse's belly is interpreted by the beholder as a

deliberate humiliation of the captive to the status of a criminal (4359–61).

- 1257 **sitte in servage and syt**: **sitte** retains here the associations the verb had in OE with helpless misery and despair (*Deor* 28; *Wife's Lament* 37, 47). Since the captives are not to lead a sedentary life (1258–9), the verb must carry here the same contextual sense, and contrasts with 'sat in her sale' (1260), where **sat** means 'sat in state' (*MED sitten* 3a).
- 1258 **werkes**: for the contextual sense 'menial tasks', cf. 136.
- 1264–8 Based on 2 Chronicles 36:17, quoted in n. to 1245–52.
- 1264 **at a slyp**: the noun occurs only here and in *Promptorium Parvulorum* 459, where it refers to the edge of a garment. It appears to be cognate with German *slippen* [slash, cleave] and Middle Dutch *slip* [(1) edge of garment; (2) incision]. The phrase presumably means 'at a stroke, with a swipe'.
- 1265 **Pulden ... by the polle**: the soldiers are, it seems, roughly forcing the heads of the priests into a position from which they can be severed from the body. **plat of her hedes**: cf. 'With the sword ... his heved of he plette' (*Havelok* 2626–7).
- 1267 **hem kyllen**: MS *hokyllen* is taken by Gollancz and subsequent editors to be an early example of *hockle* [cut up stubble], here used metaphorically of the 'mowing down' of maidens. But that verb is not otherwise recorded before 1746. It seems preferable to assume that the abbreviation for a nasal has been at some point missed from *hom* (a MS variant of *hem* [them]) *kyllen*.
- 1268 **swayf** [force, momentum] is likewise used of the rushing downward impetus of a sword-swing at WA 929. On **swolved**, cf. 1253 and n.
- 1269–84 **And all the vessels** [*vasa*] **of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures** [*thesauros*] **of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon** (2 Chronicles 36:18). Details of the **relykes** plundered, however, have been added from other parts of the Bible to give the vessels the richly focal presence they enjoy in the present retelling (cf. 1151–6).
- 1271 The brazen pillars are the subject of lengthy description in 1 Kings 7:15–21, 2 Kings 25:16–17, 2 Chronicles 3:15–17, 4:12–15 and Jeremiah 52:21–3, where they are said to have been carved with decorative 'network and pomegranates'. No gold is mentioned in any account of these pillars, which are consistently declared to be wholly of brass [*aerea*].
- 1272–5 Candles were not used in the Old Testament East, and the **candelstik** was in fact a lampstand which bore lamps formed out of wicks floating in oil. This branched lampstand – commissioned

by Moses according to specifications received from God Himself – is described in detail at Exodus 25:31–6 and 37:17–22. It was set opposite the altar and the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 21–4), and, by God’s command, ‘the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the Lord’ were to ‘burn continually’ (Leviticus 24:2, 4).

1274 there selcouth was ofte: the Ark of the Covenant (housed in the *sancta sanctorum*) figures as a mystic taboo and talisman in Old Testament history: the descent of a cloud of glory (and spontaneous fire from heaven for the sacrifice) accompanied its installation in the temple (1 Kings 8:3–13, 2 Chronicles 5:13); the waters of the Jordan divided before it to give it passage (Joshua 4:18); instant ruin and destruction attended anyone other than the high priest who touched it (1 Samuel 4, 6); consulted in times of crisis (Judges 20:27–8), it brought protection to God’s people (1 Samuel 4:3), a jinx upon the Philistines who captured it (1 Samuel 4–6) and ruin to Israel’s enemies, whose idols (Dagon) and city walls (Jericho) fell flat before it (1 Samuel 5:3, Joshua 6).

1275–7 Neither the golden band surmounting the altar table nor the **gredirne** placed under it is specifically mentioned in the accounts of Nebuzardan’s plunder of the vessels in 2 Kings 25, 2 Chronicles 25 and Jeremiah 52. But both occur in the delivering and execution of God’s directions for the vessels: *he ... made a crown of gold to it round about* (Exodus 37:2; cf. 30:3); *And thou shalt make for it a grate of network of brass; and ... put it under the compass of the altar beneath* (Exodus 27:4–5; cf. 35:16).

1277–80 Cups, basins and bowls of various kinds, **vyoles** [Vulgate *phialae*: shallow drinking vessels], together with the **bases** of the pillars of brass (described in detail at 1 Kings 7:27–37), are all listed among the temple appurtenances plundered by Nebuzardan in 2 Kings 25:13, 15 and Jeremiah 52:17, 19. Both these passages, and those dealing with the manufacture of the vessels, stress the metals brass, silver and gold, but make no mention of jewels or **vertuous stones**: an interest in jewellery, and a mental picture of the precious stones which in the poet’s own day often adorned the more sumptuous vessels for secular and sacred use, seem to have dictated this detail.

1283 See 2 Chronicles 36:18 (quoted in n. to 1269–84). The term **gazafylace** for the offering box of the temple passed into ME from the biblical *gazophylacium* (Mark 12:41).

1284 Both **ornementes** and **anournamentes** (1290) were terms regularly used specifically of church (or temple) vessels: see *MED* *ournement* 3(a) and *enournement* 1(b). **hamppred**: in all other instances of this verb, the sense is ‘(literally or figuratively)

beset'; the meaning 'put into a crate or container' would therefore appear to be a direct coinage from the noun *hamper* [receptacle, container], an item which could certainly be used for vessels: cf. '1 hamper pro vasis Argent' (cited in *MED* sv *hamper* n 1(a)).

1285 *in a sped while* is not recorded elsewhere; **sped** could be a past participle (Gollancz), but seems more likely to be a noun used attributively or as the first element of a compound.

1286–90 The construction of the temple and the reconstruction of its appointments by **Salomon** are described in 1 Kings 7 and 2 Chronicles 4. The vessels were his own personal work (1 Kings 7:48–51, 2 Chronicles 4:19–5:1). He was known as the greatest and wisest of the Jewish kings, and, in the Middle Ages, as a 'magician' (one advanced in arts such as medicine). This poet records him chiefly as an artificer, a creator of intricately perfect designs that are at the same time expressive of moral-spiritual worth: in *Cleanness* (here and at 1453–5) as the fabricator of the holy vessels, and in *Sir Gawain* as the deviser of the pentangle that forms Gawain's armorial device (*G* 625–30). **sad**, in **mony a sad yere** (1286), acts partly as a metaphorical and partly as a transferred epithet, suggesting both the weighted fullness indicated when the word is used of inanimates and the serious gravity it denoted as applied to animates; these were long years filled with tasks to which sober attention was given.

1290 **anournamentes**: see n. to **1284**.

1291–2 *And he burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard [= Nebuzardan], brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about* (2 Kings 25:9–10; cf. Jeremiah 52:13–14, 2 Chronicles 36:19).

1294–5 Nebuzardan's extension of his activities beyond Jerusalem does not figure in the Vulgate; cf. the addition at 1177–9, which also points to the larger political and geographical unit whose fate is necessarily intertwined with that of its capital city.

1294 **hynes** [corners, i.e. furthest parts]: the MS reads *hyrne* (for which Anderson offers the unattested gloss 'hinterland'); emendation to **hynes** regularizes both the sense and the metre of the b-verse, which requires a double dip.

1296–1303 The biblical Nebuzardan 'brought/carried ... to Babylon' the plundered vessels (2 Chronicles 36:18, Jeremiah 52:17) and 'carried away captive' numerous inhabitants of Jerusalem, some of whom were slain (Jeremiah 52:27, 30); many of the well-born were taken into captivity. The Book of Daniel begins with Nebuchadnezzar's instruction that from this number some well-

favoured, intelligent and educated boys should be selected to serve before the king; among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (Daniel 1:3–6). The poem has again given its own emphasis to the status once enjoyed by the captives (1299–1303), as at 1257–60.

- 1297 Presented him the presonerres:** for this semi-technical sense of *present* [commit, hand over] with reference to prisoners, cf. 1217 and *Otuel* 834 ('Thei ... thoute presente Charles the king With Clarel, that thei hadden inome [taken]'). For **in pray** meaning 'as captives', cf. 'the devyll takyth in prei and turmentyth ... corsyd men' (Yonge 183).
- 1302 Daniel ... devine noble:** Daniel had *understanding in all visions and dreams* (Daniel 1:17). His own oracular dreams, and his interpretation both of the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar and of the portentous words mysteriously inscribed on the wall during Belshazzar's feast, form the main substance of the Book of Daniel.
- 1304–38** See pp. 89–90 on the sympathetic treatment of Nebuchadnezzar here, which is due to his role as a foil to Belshazzar, introduced as an unworthy inheritor of the glory bequeathed him by such a **noble** father (1337–8). The lines owe little to the Book of Daniel, in which the sacker of Jerusalem is, naturally, not represented in an attractive light; but even the defeat of the Jewish nation is here briefly seen from Nebuchadnezzar's own point of view (1304–8), as his heart swells with pride in his achievements.
- 1309 juelrye:** the earliest recorded occurrence of this French-derived word.
- 1312** On Nebuchadnezzar's name here, see n. to 1176.
- 1313–20** Nebuchadnezzar's reverential treatment of the vessels owes practically nothing to the Bible, which simply declares that 'he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god' (Daniel 1:2). That they played any part in instilling into him a sense of the supreme deity they served, or that he had any appreciative awe which curbed him from vandalism or desecration of this sacred artwork, is in fact counter-indicated: in an earlier attack on Jerusalem he *cut in pieces all the vessels of gold ... in the temple of the Lord* (2 Kings 24:13).
- 1318–20** The events **hereafter** that will show Nebuchadnezzar's awe of the vessels to have been prudent are the disasters that befall Belshazzar following his own irreverent treatment of them (1529ff): a contrast announced as the main theme of this narrative (1149–56). For *work as the wise* used of self-preserving prudence, cf. Medea's advice to Jason to abandon his perilous quest ('Wirkes as a wise man and your wille chaunge': *DT* 576);

and for *have right* similarly used of actions that are in the best interests of the agent, cf. ‘thei have right to go, for the abidinge here for hem is not goode’ (said of knights deserting a battle: *Merlin* 409).

- 1325–8 Daniel’s pronouncements on his own God come mainly in the course of his expositions to Nebuchadnezzar of the meanings of two cryptic dreams of the king’s (Daniel 2 and 4). His interpretation of the first does include the point that all Nebuchadnezzar’s **godes** (the blessings listed in 1321–4) are enjoyed by the grace of God: *Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all* (Daniel 2:37–8). The **samples** (incidents or stories expounded to teach a lesson) are presumably Daniel’s allegorical interpretation of the dreams themselves as prophecies of God’s will with regard to the fate of Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar is won to profess Daniel’s God at several points (e.g. 2:47, 4:3, 37).
- 1329–32 Nebuchadnezzar’s death is not recorded in the Book of Daniel.
- 1333–60 This characterization of Belshazzar (like that of Nebuchadnezzar) is largely independent of the Bible, which relates of him only the story of his ill-fated feast (Daniel 5). Daniel’s exposition of the writing on the wall does include a reference to the worship of idols (Daniel 5:23) described at 1341–8.
- 1335–6 Trevisa gives an account of the huge proportions and material construction of the city which made it virtually impregnable to attack (*Properties* II, 738).
- 1340–48 The lines are based on Daniel 5:23 (see n. to 1333–60): *and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is ... hast thou not glorified.*
- 1341–4 The association between idols and devils (1341) was common. Idols were thought to be entered and inhabited by devils in order to mislead and pervert mankind: *Destruction of Troy* refers to ‘fyndes That entrid into ymagis ever for dissayet’ (4289–90; cf. 4350–51 and *Paradise Lost* I.373–5). The emphasis on the crude materiality of the images (**tre, stokkes, stones**), and on their man-made origins (1341–2), is an implicit refutation of their divinity: ‘for thyng that we seen alle That it is stoon – that men may wel espyen – That ilke stoon a god thow wolt it calle’ (*CT* VIII.499–501). **false** (1341) probably combines the sense of

‘spurious’ with ‘contrary to the Christian revelation’ (*MED fals adj* 7); and **stout** (1343) puns Belshazzar’s intended meaning, ‘fine, excellent’, against the sense applicable to the material of which the gods are made, ‘solid, sturdy’ (*MED stout(e adj* 4 and 5).

1345–6 clepes after helpe: for the expression in the context of a prayer, cf. ‘the goddess alle After whos helpe now I clepe and calle’ (Lydgate, *Troy Book* 4.6831–2). On **reden him right**, see n. to *G* 373–4.

1347 gruchen him his grace: the collocation was common; cf. ‘Hit shal be gright hym that grace in his grete nede’ (*DT* 7071).

1348 Pagans are often represented as smashing their idols in spite (after disappointments). Cf. *Chanson de Roland* 2588 (‘A granz bastuns le batent e defruisent’ [with great clubs they smash him into pieces]); for ME examples, see e.g. *Guy of Warwick* 3705–16, where the images are similarly dismantled with ‘staves gret’ by an angry sultan, and *Sowdone of Babylone* 2504–10. The brutish stupidity of the poet’s Belshazzar is reflected in his use of a **klubbe**, a weapon characteristically used by the uncouth (churls and giants).

1351–6 Belshazzar’s *concupinae* are alluded to in the Vulgate account of his feast (Daniel 5:2–3, 23), but without any of the moral opprobrium that is here attached to the fact of their existence. They are part of this Belshazzar’s tendency to idolize **misschapen things** (1355), because a glitzy surface blinds him to moral deformity: the only other example cited in *MED* sv *misshapen* (d) (‘immoral, sinful’) is one in which the underlying analogy with physical deformity is very evident: our soul, formed in the likeness of God, was ‘mysshape by synne’ (*Myroure of Oure Ladye* 98).

1352 mony a lemman ... that ladies were called: lemman occurs as a poetic word for ‘sweetheart, lover’, and is applied to Christ at *Pe* 796 and *passim*. But outside poetic contexts, it had acquired a somewhat coarse register, and the sarcastic contrast between *lemman* and *lady* (repeated at 1370) occurs also in Chaucer’s Manciple’s Tale (*CT* IX.218–20), where it points up a piece of social snobbery in linguistic usage: a churl has a *lemman* (‘bit on the side’), a ‘gentle’-man has a *lady* (‘mistress’). The sarcasm in *Cleanness* is based on a slightly different logic: the contrast between the **lemman** and the **wyf** (1351) points scathingly to the inapplicability of the denomination **ladies** to women who, not being married to Belshazzar, could not claim the equivalent of his own status as a *lord*. Cf. 1423 and n.

1357–1424 An elaborate expansion of one simple statement in the Bible: *Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of*

his lords, and drank wine before the thousand (Daniel 5:1).

1358 **vouche an avayment**: the formal and legal register of both **avayment** [information (to a court, etc), announcement, statement] and **vouche** [declare formally; cf. *Pa* 165] is here used ironically: Belshazzar is putting his **vayne glory** ‘on the record’, testifying to its authenticity.

1377–92 Babylon succeeded Nineveh (see *Pa* 353–4) as the foremost city of Assyria and was famous as one of the greatest cities of the ancient world. Descriptions of it had passed from Greek and Roman authorities into medieval texts (Lecklider 1997: 198–9). Various dimensions are given for the massive walls (1381–4), the incredible ‘hogenes and strengthe’ of which made it hard to believe that ‘so strong a cite myghte be take’ (Trevisa, *Properties* II, 744): see Herodotus, *Histories* 81; Honorius, *De Imagine Mundi* col. 125; Orosius 42. *Pinnae* [pinnacles or battlements] on the walls (1382) are referred to by Orosius, and towers projecting upward from them (1383) in Quintus Curtius (V.i). The location of the city (1378–80), ‘set in a fayr pleyne’ (Mandeville, *Bodley Version* 33), can also be traced back through the flat plain and *natura loci laetissima* of Orosius to the ‘wide plain’ of Herodotus. Babylon was surrounded by the Euphrates (which ran through it) and a network of canals and, though the precisely numbered **seven grete wateres** (1380) are not paralleled in other authorities, ‘the rivers of Babylon’, the city that dwelled ‘upon many waters’, were familiar from the Bible (Psalm 137:1, Jeremiah 51:13). The large ground area of the walled city (1377, 1387) occurs in nearly all the accounts; its square form (1386), ‘disposede as a castelle with walles yliche long and square’ (Trevisa, drawing on Orosius), also goes back to Herodotus. The similarities between Babylon in *Cleanness*, Castle Hautdesert in *Sir Gawain*, and the castle of heaven in *Pearl* are due to the fact that all three are visualized as ‘chateaux’, walled communities centred on a castle court; cf. Trevisa’s statement (*Properties* II, 744) that Babylon was constructed as a castle in that the equilateral walls of its circumscribing boundary or **poursent** (C 1385, *Pe* 1035) formed a perfect **sware** (C 1386, *Pe* 1023–4). The heavenly Jerusalem is not required to be defensible (*Pe* 1065–8); but the city/castle fortresses of Babylon and Hautdesert contain not only the magnificence of the central palace and **halle** within (C 1388–92, G 794–802), and of pinnacled or **Troched** towers (C 1383, G 795), but also the sturdy and defensible walls provided with **abataylment** (G 790) or **carneles** (C 1382, G 801) and with structures from which missiles could be directed at attacking forces (G 791–2). The splendid palace within the walls (1388–92)

is referred to by Josephus (citing Berosus): Nebuchadnezzar had added a new palace to that of his father, ‘to describe the vast height and immense riches of which, it would perhaps be too much for me to attempt’ (*Antiquities* X.xi). The measure given of the length of the hall – a **bay** sufficient for horses to gallop along (1392) – is possibly a reflex of the measure of the thickness of the walls given by Herodotus and in several subsequent accounts: the summits were broad enough for a four-horsed chariot to drive between the two rows of houses of defence constructed upon them. The omission of this exotic detail, together with those of the famous pensile gardens and the peculiar bituminous material of which the walls had been made – all of which figure prominently in other accounts of the city – makes for a metropolis that is less of a curiosity and more of a medieval archetype of combined sturdiness and splendour, as befits the city’s role in *Cleanness*: Belshazzar takes pride and confidence in and from its redoubtability (1335–6), but, more importantly, it forms in every sense the boast of Nebuchadnezzar (1663–8). The prominence given to it as an architectural achievement is consistent with the emphasis in this part of the poem on art and craftsmanship and on Nebuchadnezzar’s responsive relation to it.

- 1380 Umbe-sweyed ... with seven grete wateres:** *sweie*, though it figures as a general verb of motion in alliterative verse (cf. *Pa* 72), is used specifically of moving water at *Pa* 236; **Umbesweyed** here thus presumably means ‘surrounded by flowing currents’.
- 1381 wruxled** occurs only here and at *G* 2191 (‘the wye [man] wruxled in grene’). The two instances seem to represent an otherwise unattested weakened sense [?set up *or* out, ?arrange] of *wrixle* [alter, interchange].
- 1383** Towers set at frequent intervals in the encircling wall were a feature of imposing and well-defended cities from ancient to medieval times: Constantinople had towers at sixty yards from one another (Koch 1978: 84). Babylon, according to Diodorus Siculus, ‘had a wall with great towers set at frequent intervals, the wall being three hundred and sixty stades [c. forty miles] in circumference’ (II, vii), and Quintus Curtius refers to towers rising ten feet higher than a wall fifty cubits high (V.i). **twenty spere lenthe** might refer to the intervals or to the height of the towers (cf. waves mounting up ‘fyve speire lenth’ at *DT* 3697), though it is usually understood in the former sense. On **Troched** [?pinnacled] see n. to *G* 795.
- 1384** Previous editors have assumed **palle** to be a spelling of ME *pale*. A&W gloss the line ‘And (other towers) more closely crowded around the outside with wooden platforms placed at right angles’.

However, neither the spelling **palle** nor the sense ‘wooden platforms’ is recorded for ME *pale*. Wooden hoarding or platforms (termed *bretage*) were in any case temporary structures built when a castle was under siege (cf. the **brutage** at C 1190), which Babylon is not. It is more probable that **palle** refers to the cloth-hangings with which medieval cities were decorated at great feasts (for examples see *MED* sv *pal* 3(b)).

- 1391 the halle to hit mede** is usually understood to mean that the hall was proportionate in size and splendour to its architectural context, though MS *med* is obscure and unmetrical and requires emendation. (The emendation to *mad* (Menner) is also unmetrical; the participial form used at line ending is *made*.) We assume *med* is an error for **mede** (< OE *gemede* [agreeable, proportionate]) otherwise found only at *William* 604: ‘thow hast warsched [cured, comforted] me wel with thi mede wordes’.
- 1392 bay** (< OF *baie* [an opening]) referred to the open space, set off by columns or posts, at ground level of a building; the term also indicated, in phrases like ‘a house of three bays’, how many rooms or vertical divisions a building had at floor level. The meaning here is presumably that the undivided room or ‘bay’ of the great hall was of a length sufficient for a galloping pace to be reached in its courtyard – with the implication, perhaps, that horseback races or jousts could be held there.
- 1396 Stepe stared stones of his stoute throne:** rendered by A&W (following Gollancz) ‘ascended the stone [lit. stones arranged as steps] of his massive throne’. But among other objections to this reading is the strong alliterative connection – inside and outside this oeuvre – between *stones* [gems], the adjective *stepe* [bright] and the verb *stare* [shine brightly]: see e.g. **G 1818** (‘a starande stone stondande alofte’), *Pe* **113–16** (‘... stones stepe, As stremande sternes ... Staren in welkyn’).
- 1397ff** The occasion of a royal feast here calls forth much the same topoi as are used of Arthur’s New Year feast in *G* 109–29 – though they have been adapted to suggest a somewhat more baroque and blaring quality to the feast of this godless Eastern extrovert.
- 1398–1400** The dais at Camelot is occupied by Arthur, his queen, a bishop and his nephews; the side tables are occupied by other of the knights (*G* 109–15). Belshazzar’s queen (who is not present: see **1586–90**) has been ousted by his **concubines** and, Belshazzar having reserved the dais for them and for himself (1399–1400), the **barouns** must all sit at the side tables (1398), leaving the **knighetes** (who ranked beneath *barons*) to be scattered round the hall floor (1397) in the ad hoc way usually reserved for humble

or charity-fed guests (cf. *PP* B.12.195–204).

- 1402–4 The first course is similarly ushered in by **crakkyng** from trumpets hung with gleaming pennants in *G* 116–17. For the alliterative collocation between **Sturne**, **strake** and **steven**, cf. ‘Stern [bold men] stevyn up strake, strakid thaire trumpis’ (*WA* 1509). **strake** was a verb used of hunting or military signals given on wind instruments (cf. *G* 1364, 1923), and both it and the adjective **sturne** [grim, fierce] are elsewhere used of trumpets in martial rather than festive circumstances: there is an aggressive quality to the blares which usher in Belshazzar’s feast.
- 1403 **wrasten out crakkes**: MS *wrasten crakkes* gives a b-verse without a long dip. *Wrest* as used of forcing or throwing out sound seems commonly to have been construed with adverbial *out*: cf. e.g. ‘the nightyngale Wrestes out her notes musycall’ (*Lyfe of Ioseph* 388).
- 1406 **sewes** [stews, sauces] and **sylveren** vessels likewise figure in collocation in the royal feast at Camelot (*G* 124).
- 1407–8 The reference is to ornamental paper coverings used at table – here taking the form of miniature cut-out buildings (**logges**): cf. ‘bake-metes and dissh-metes ... peynted and castelled with papir’ (*CT* X.445); see also *G* 801–2 and n. OF *peint/point a* [painted over with, decorated with], adduced by Anderson, accounts satisfactorily for **poynted of golde**. But the architectural sense of **Lyfte** (as used of constructing or raising buildings: cf. *G* 12), obviously relevant to **logges**, is perhaps continued in **poynted** in the sense of *MED* *pointen* v¹ 1(d) (‘mortar, fill in gaps and seams’), to give ‘Buildings erected over them ... with gold acting as mortar-pointing’.
- 1409–11 The decorative scheme on the vessels is three-tiered: **baboynes** (gargoyles or grotesques, not necessarily simian) **above** separated from **bestes anunder** by **Fowles** [birds] in foliage **bitwene**. The ornamental motifs and the medium (enamel) are those favoured at this period: cf. ‘ii pelves [basins] de argento ... enamelata in medio cum babewyns’ in *Lincoln Cathedral Inventory* 11 (cf. Campbell 1991: 157–8); ‘Ymagry ... Of bestes and babery’ (*DT* 1561–2); and the recurrent references to designs of ‘animals or birds in foliage’ in Theophilus (20, 31, 105, 109, 111, 126, 130, 137, 141). The poet’s enthusiasm for decorative work, and for jewellery and metalwork in particular, perhaps explains this anticipation of the finery of the temple vessels (described at 1456–88), the splendour of which represents everything Belshazzar is morally and aesthetically insensitive to; but the profligate king’s own tableware (not in the Vulgate) is probably not an entirely independent embellishment, since it is

referred to by Josephus: 'and there were a great many vessels of silver, such as were made for royal entertainments' (*Antiquities* X.xi).

- 1412–16 There is no parallel at Camelot for the waiters on horseback (1412). And, though Arthur's royal feast does include 'nakryne noyse with the noble pipes' (G 118), there is more percussion at Belshazzar's. The expressive phrase **bougounes busch** is made up of two otherwise unrecorded words: **bougounes** (tentatively glossed 'drumsticks' and referred to OF *boujoun* [rod, stick] in *MED*) has no discernible cognates in ME; and **busch** [beat, strike], though well attested as a verb, occurs as a noun only here. The unfamiliar vocabulary suggests a gothically lavish quality to this Eastern feast as compared with its Western counterpart in *Sir Gawain*.
- 1416 For **thikke** applied to drumbeats in close succession, cf. 'thei betyn hir basyns with thikke strokes' (Chaucer, *Boece* 4.m5.23).
- 1420–36 Elaborating Daniel 5:2: ***Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.***
- 1420–22 The verbs **warmed** and **breythed** are not metaphorical, but semi-technical, referring to the supposed effects of wine: it increased bodily heat and induced a sense of well-being (1420; cf. Trevisa, *Properties* II, 1078); and its quality of 'fumosity' caused vapour to rise up from the stomach to the head (see *MED fumosite* 2(b) and *OED fumosity* 2 and *fume* n 4).
- 1423 **wenches** could be used without derogatory implications to distinguish 'servants' from mistresses or 'unmarried girls' from wives (cf. 974, 1250); but it is here used in the opprobrious sense which it carried (especially with a possessive adjective: cf. 1716) when used to distinguish respectable from unrespectable women (cf. 'I am a gentil woman and no wench': *CT* IV.2202) and so to denote a married or unmarried woman who becomes someone's lover and is thus in disparagement 'cleped his wenche or his lemman' (*CT* IX.220). Cf. 1352 and n.
- 1425 Cf. Achilles, speaking of the Greek expedition to Troy: 'And we in dotage full depe drevyn by faith' (*DT* 9749).
- 1429 For **vessel** as a collective singular, cf. *WA* 3828 and Mandeville, *Bodley Version* 129 ('all here coppis ben of ... precious stonys, for vessel of syluyr they preise not for they welyn of hem neythir etyn ne drynkyn').
- 1430–32 The representation of Nebuchadnezzar's capture of the vessels as an act of **noble** and **gentyle** prowess, performed by the

chivalric deeds of his **knichtes**, is consistent with the distinctive perspective in this poem – from which Nebuchadnezzar is seen as a conqueror-king whose royal glory and splendour and patrician pride contrast with the gross loutishness of his son (1321–56) and whose forcible abduction of the vessels angered God less than Belshazzar’s ‘unclean’ contempt for them (1149–56). The verb *conquer* referred to the act of ‘acquiring’ (rather than ‘defeating’) by ‘fair fight’, its grammatical object being what is acquired (not the opponent) in battle (here **the vessel that his fader ... Conquerd**); the word had thus more positive force than it has today and is consistent with the heroic note that is here struck.

1432 **Judee, Jerusalem**: see n. to 1177–80.

1434–6 **ladies, cortaysly, bounte, thewes**: the vocabulary of *courtaysye* satirizes Belshazzar’s distorted notion of courtliness – and contrasts with the serious use of chivalric terms (in the previous quatrain) with respect to his father. Belshazzar is representing his tasteless gesture as a regally lavish act in honour of his favourites: his sacrilege is thus given an immediate ‘motive’ (to upgrade his mistresses to **ladies** [noblewomen] by degrading the sacred vessels) that is not found in the Vulgate, but which is consistent with previous indications of his vulgarly gaudy sense of worth (see 1343–4, 1351–5 and n. to 1351–6).

1434 **lape** was generally used of animals drinking or of humans drinking like animals. In alliterative usage, however, a word often lost its more precise associations and figured merely as a synonym in what was probably recognized as a ‘poeticism’ characteristic of that verse form; cf. n. to *Pa* 278.

1437–55 An elaborately vivid expansion of Daniel 5:3: ***Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem.***

1440 The poet is imagining the preparations for the coming conversion of the temple vessels into drinking vessels in terms of the hall furniture of his own day, when wine was poured out into vessels placed on a side table or **cupborde** covered with a white cloth (Woolgar 1999: 148–9, 165).

1441 **jueles**: for the sense ‘precious objects or artefacts’, cf. ‘For thou [Belshazzar] were served of the vesselles That of hys temple were iuelles’ (Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne* 9423–4).

1445–8 ***And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy*** (Exodus 30:29; cf. 40:9–11); ***And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the Lord, and he burnt incense upon the altar that was before the Lord*** (1 Kings 9:25). The Judaic temple and rites were understood to be the precursive ancestors of the

Christian church, the Old Testament sacrifices foreshadowing the sacrament of the Eucharist, which was seen as a propitiatory **sacrefyce** by Christ of Himself (see e.g. Mirk 154). The vocabulary here – **blessed**, **bischopes** (the term was used of an Old Testament high priest as well as of a Christian prelate: see *MED* *bishop* 3), **anoynted**, **sacrefyce** – exploits the terminology shared with Christianity to present Belshazzar's act as effectively the equivalent of the defilement of the Mass vessels (cf. 15–16).

1449 to serve Satanas the blake: the vessels are represented as now serving the devil rather than the **Lord** (1448), for they are used to serve the purposes of lechery and drunkenness (which, as deadly sins, were seen as 'doing sacrifice to the devil': *CT* VI.468–71, 480–82) in a man who uses the occasion to belaud the pagan idols (1522; cf. 1341) who were identified with the devil (see *MED* sv *devel* 3 and n. to 1341–4).

1453–5 Cf. 1285–90 (and see n. to **1286–90**).

1453 seven yere and a sythe more: the poet has computed the time more accurately than had the Bible itself (*So was he seven years in building it*: 1 Kings 6:38); for Solomon began the temple in the fourth year of his reign in the second month (1 Kings 6:1) and completed it in the eleventh year in the eighth month (1 Kings 6:38).

1456–7 bassynes ... and eweres of sute: basins and ewers were used for the ceremonial hand-washing before meals and are often coupled; cf. 'Euer when he clepithe, wayte redy and entende, basoun and ewere, and on your shuldur a towelle' (*Book of Nurture* 936–7).

1456–88 This second account of the vessels is also an addition to the Vulgate (where they are not described in the course of the stories which the poem is following). The first (1269–80) had been based on details given in earlier parts of the Vulgate – i.e. at God's original commissioning of them (Exodus 30:37–8) and at Solomon's refurbishment of the temple he builds (1 Kings 7). The poet here supplements that itemization with a description, based not on the Vulgate, but on 'Harrods best' in fourteenth-century tableware, which could be very sumptuous indeed, and was certainly reported as being so at the tables of potentates of legendary wealth (see n. to **1465**); the vessels here are executed in a style differing only in degree of elaboration from that of Belshazzar's own royal plate: enamel work (1411, 1457), lids with architectural designs (1407, 1458–63) and the decorative motif of birds in foliage (1410, 1464–72).

1458–63 Ornamental cups were often very elaborate, and much ingenuity, cost and skill went into the lids of those that were

Covered. See plate 12 of Cherry's *Goldsmiths* and the description in *Floris and Blancheflour* of a cup on the body of which is depicted the abduction of Helen by Paris, while 'on the covercle above Purtraide was ther bother love' (169–70). A lidded cup with battlemented indentation is mentioned in a York will from 1444 (cited *MED* sv *batilment*): 'Unam peciam [cup] coopertam cum batelment deauratam'. The present cup-lids, designed to resemble **casteles**, include **batelment**, turrets with pinnacles rising behind and above the crenellation (1461–3) and **banteles** (1459) beneath it. **banteles** occur in ME only here and in *Pearl*, where the reference is to the stepped foundation-tiers of the New Jerusalem (992, 1017). The reference on both occasions is to a projecting tier of masonry supporting some structure above – at the bottom of the wall in *Pearl*, at the top in *Cleanness*. In the latter case, *bantel* work supports a battlemented summit which would thus project out over the wall. **Enbaned** (1459) – a word recorded only here and at G 790 ('Enbaned under the abataylment') – clearly refers to a castle provided with such a machicolated parapet. On the probable Provençal origin of the word, and of other terms of castle architecture in English and French (*brattice*, *crenel*, *machicolation*), see, respectively, Skeat 1903–6: 359–60 and Anderson.

- 1460 The aesthetics of castle architecture likewise prompt the adjective **ferly** at *Pe* 1084 and the adverb **ferlyly** at *G* 796. **ferlyly** as an adjective occurs only here; the reduplication of the -ly suffix is a speciality of the *Gawain* poet, who uses it to create a long dip where metre requires it (Duggan 1994).
- 1462 **fylyoles** occurs only here and in a similar passage from *G* 794–800: 'And innermore he behelde that halle ful highe, Towres telded bitwene ... Fayre fylyoles that fyed and ferlyly longe ... mony pinacle paynted.' The word appears to be related to OF *fillole* [column, turret]. On both occasions the reference is to elegantly long towers, more for show than defence and rising from within and behind the battlemented wall.
- 1464–72 It is unlikely that the poet is still describing the castle-lidded cups (though editors seem to assume so), or indeed any one class of item, as opposed to a decorative style dominant among the vessels (as 1473–4 implies) other than the following vials and goblets (1475–6) and the preceding lidded cups (1458–63), which have comparably elaborate, but separately treated, ornamentation.
- 1465 **papejays**: for the popularity of birds-and-foliage as an ornamental design, see n. to 1409–11. Parrots were often used as decorative motifs (see *MED* sv *papejai(e)* (b)); and jewelled fruit

(1467–72) occurs also in the golden vines, with grapes fashioned from gems, which are found elsewhere (Evans 1952: 33) and which figure in accounts of Eastern courts of legendary magnificence, such as the palace of Porrus in *Wars of Alexander* (3794ff) and the court of the Great Chan in *Mandeville* (*Livre* 373–4). For the appreciative interest in the birds-in-foilage design, cf. the birds amid flowers embroidered upon Gawain's helmet strap ('papejayes paynted pervyng [periwinkle] bitwene ...': G 611–12).

1466 pomegarnades (MS *pomgarnades*): the emendation is indicated by b-verse metre and is justified etymologically (< OF *pome grenate*). Pomegranates are frequently referred to in the Vulgate as a decorative motif figuring on the fixtures, fittings and vestments of the temple (Exodus 28:33–4, 1 Kings 7:18, 2 Chronicles 3:16, Jeremiah 52:22–3); but the detail has here been absorbed into a bejewelled intricacy of the imagined birds-in-foilage design which is independent of the Vulgate but represents fourteenth-century state-of-the-art goldsmithery.

1469–72 For the list of jewels, cf. *Pe* 994–1020; in both cases, the jewel-telling (for which the biblical source text provides the occasion in *Pearl*, but not in *Cleanness*) typifies the medium provided in each poem by art in general, and goldsmithery in particular, for the articulation of divine refinement and excellence.

1469–70 safyres and sardiners are frequently found in alliterative collocation: see *MED* sv *sardine(e)* and *sardoine(e)*.

Alabaundarynes are described in lapidaries as red stones similar in appearance to the sardonix.

1471 and clere rubies: rubies is trisyllabic: cf. 'with rebies grete' (*SJ* 1254b), where the metrical requirement for a long dip similarly indicates a trisyllable. In the present b-verse, French stress, on the second syllable of **rubies**, is also required.

1472 Peritotes: Gollancz defends MS *penitotes* by comparing attested variation between *periwinkle* and *pennywinkle*; that variation is not comparable, however, since it is due to the influence of two distinct etymons (OE *winewincle* and *perwince*): see *OED* headnote sv *periwinkle*¹ and *periwinkle*². The MS reading is thus more likely to be a scribal error than an authentic spelling. Peridot also occurs in the list of jewels that adorn the table of the Great Chan in the MS tradition of *Mandeville* (*Livre* 374, MS Lo6).

pynkardines (which occurs nowhere else in ME) has been explained as a corruption of French *perre carnadine* [carnelian], or as somehow associated with *pintadine*, a word which appears post-medievally in various Romance languages, and refers in

French to a nacreous stone (see Menner).

- 1473 **trayled and trifled a-traverce**: the noun *trail* was used of an ornamental spray on vestments, vessels, etc; **trayled** thus means ‘provided with decorative sprays’ (such as the bejewelled foliage clusters of 1467–8). In *Sir Gawain*, **trifles** figure in the head cloths of the older woman (960), and embroidered **trifles** in the array of the Green Knight (165), the decorative sense of the word perhaps being influenced by the use of *trefoil* (in AN also *trifel*, *trefle*) as an ornamental device: cf. ‘Trifeled and traversed with trueloves bitwene’ (*Awntyrs* 510) and, again in collocation with *travers*, ‘Trefolyte and traverste with trewloves’ (*Awntyrs* 354).
- 1474 **bekyr and bolle**: Menner’s emendation of MS *bekyrande þe bolde*.
- 1476 **fyoles** (**vyoles** at 1280): the word is found as the equivalent of both Latin *ampullae* and French *petites flascons* (see *MED* sv *fiol*). The description has proceeded from the larger items (basins and ewers: 1456–7), through the spectacularly decorated drinking vessels (1458–75), to the small **fyoles**, on which the prevailing design is elegantly downsized from birds in tree-boughs to butterflies amid flowers; butterflies were often used as decorative motifs (cf. the embroidered butterflies of *G* 166).
- 1478 **by acost** is the solution to MS *biacost* proposed by Anderson, who glosses ‘alongside’ and refers the phrase to OF *par a costé*. Though not entirely satisfactory, this suggestion is preferable to that adopted by most other editors of ‘by a cost (= contrivance)’: there seems no reason why the candlestick in particular (rather than the altar, for instance) should require special portage arrangements.
- 1479–80 **the pyleres** (as opposed to **hit bases**) must be those referred to at 1271 and 1278 as among the temple furnishings pillaged from Jerusalem along with the vessels. **hit bases**, however, suggest the **bases** are not those referred to at 1278 or the ten bases Solomon had made for the lavers (1 Kings 7:27–37), but belong to some stand provided for the lampstand. Neither term can refer to any integral part of the lampstand, which did not have pillars, but six branches projecting from a central shaft, which is several times said to have been made all of pure gold, and with regard to which no mention ever occurs in the Vulgate of pillars, brass or base.
- 1481–8 On the accounts of the lampstand in Exodus, see 1272–5 and n. It was made *ex auro puro* (cf. **(all) of (brende) golde**: 1481, 1488). The **boghes** (1481) and **lampes** (1485) correspond with the *calami* [branches] and *lucernae* of the Vulgate. But the decorative design of the lampstand has been elaborately

reworked and updated. The ***bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower*** – set on the arms of the menorah (Exodus 25:33–5, 37:19–22) – provide an ornamental motif both suggesting and suggested by the tree-like structure of the candelabrum; the device has been extended in the poem to produce a closer verbal and visual link between the **boghes** [arms, boughs] of the candelabrum (1481) and the forms of the **Braunches** (1482) superimposed upon them by art and reinforced by the birds seated on these boughs/branches. This birds-in-foliage design provides a decorative link with other items in the treasury (cf. 1464–72), but the motif is elaborated to justify the climactic place given to the **candelstik** (1478): these birds are represented with splayed wings (1484), so that the glinting kaleidoscope of the many different **hues** (1483) of precious metals creates the impression of waving movement (1484) in their outspread feathers. The Vulgate lamp bowls or *scyphi* now contain updated lighting, the **morteres of wax** (bowls containing wax candles) at 1487 being (like the **serges** of 1489) an anachronism: in the Old Testament East, lamplight came from wicks floating in oil (cf. ‘Of seed of the rape ... is oyle ymade that is nedefulle in many use and nameliche [especially] in lampis and morteres of candelstikes *in domo domini* [the House of the Lord] in the temple of Ierusalem’: Trevisa, *Properties* II, 1034). The **morteres** are here **merked** with their own distinctive decorative motif (1487–8): that of grotesques or beasts (seen as a fashionable design on tableware at 1409). The **candelstik**, specifically said to be lit (**lemed**: 1486), thus appears as a summation of state-of-the-art decorative skills.

- 1483** The a-verse lacks an alliterative stave. Some such adjective before **kyndes** as *curious, clear, coloured, quoynt* [elegant] – which have all been suggested – would regularize the metre. But **Of mony kyndes ... of fele kyn** looks suspiciously like anticipation of content, and the original a-verse may well have been quite different.
- 1485 of the launces** (MS *of þe*): a noun beginning with *l-* has plainly been omitted by the scribe. **launces** (cf. *Pe* 978) was an early suggestion adopted by Menner; Gollancz opted for *lefsel* (cf. *Pa* 448) and A&W for *lyndes* (cf. *G* 526).
- 1490 truly to stande**: ‘to be in position as in its true place’ (cf. *Tree and Twelve Frutes* 53/19, cited in *MED* sv *treuli* 9(d): ‘Vertu ... whan it comith in to the soule ... comith as in to his owne naturel place where he sitteth ful trewly and acordith well with the soule’). The meaning ‘faithfully to remain loyal’ (in which sense the words *stand* and *true* are often collocated: see *MED* sv *stonden*

24(a) and (b)) is, however, also appropriate in the context of the semi-personification of the candelabrum (1489). The phrase contributes to a series – **trauthe, truly, sothefaste** (1490–91) – in which authenticity, fidelity, veracity and rightness are all by turns involved.

- 1490–91** The candelabrum is here (as at 1273–4) associated with the mystic solemnity of the *sancta sanctorum*, whose entrance it illuminated: it was placed so as to shine over against the veiled-off entrance to the holy of holies (Exodus 40:24–5, 1 Kings 7:49, 2 Chronicles 4:20).
- 1491–2** The Ark of the Covenant, a special medium for the divine word or **speche**, was kept in the *sancta sanctorum*, normally entered only by the high priest (Hebrews 9:7). God might, however, speak to **special prophetes** from or in the vicinity of the ark – either spontaneously, as in the case of Samuel (1 Samuel 3:3–6), or in answer to a prayer addressed to the ‘oracle’ of the ark, as in the case of Joshua (Joshua 7:6–10). The common collocation of *speak/speech* and *special* sometimes implies confidential discussion with trusted persons: cf. *DT* 11374 and (in reference to a council of the Greeks summoned by Agamemnon) 8830 (‘Thus he spake for his spede his specials unto’; cf. Barbour, *Bruce* V.501).
- 1494–6** The lines announce the exemplification in literal terms promised at 1149–56 of the warning issued at 1133–48 against metaphorical defilement of a soul sanctified to God by shrift. Specific lexical parallels occur in the case of **displeses/Displeased** (1136, 1494) and **defowle/fouled** (1147, 1495).
- 1494 strange** (MS *stronge*): the requirement of a final unstressed syllable indicates that the MS reading represents ‘strange’ rather than ‘strong’, which is how some editors have interpreted the word. With the spelling, cf. MS *stronge* (= strange) at *G* 1028 and *Death and Liffe* 39. For **strange** meaning ‘outside the bounds of normality’ and used in pejorative sense, cf. 861.
- 1497 in His sacrefyce ... anyoynted**: here again the Old Testament sacrifices are seen as the sacramental equivalent of sanctification by holy unction (cf. **with bestene blod ... anyoynted** at 1446).
- 1498 Thurgh the somones of Himself**: God Himself had given to Moses the precise specifications for the tabernacle, its vessels, the sacrifices, etc (Exodus 25–31).
- 1500 be**: the subjunctive mood is normal after **Til**, even though the reference is to an actual, not a hypothetical, event (cf. *CT* I.4400). There is no reference in Daniel 5 to the drunken state which the poet attributes (cf. 1421) to Belshazzar, but cf. Jeremiah’s prophecy of the fall of Babylon: *In their heat I will make their*

feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the Lord (51:39, repeated almost verbatim at 51:57), a passage which may also have suggested the comment at 1766.

1501 **wlates** [feels sick, turns at His stomach]: see n. to 305.

1502 The rather odd expression **porvayes a mynde** [?comes to a decision; ?prearranges a plan] may be the result of the deployment of a collocation between **play** and *porvay* that already existed in the poet's metrical repertoire (cf. *Pa* 36).

1503–4 **wonder** could often refer to what was grimly or alarmingly, rather than excitingly, out of the ordinary, and carries those negative associations here (cf. *G* 16). God's reaction to uncleanness here lacks the **haste** previously declared to distinguish the punishments visited – **in haste of His ire** (200, 599–600) – upon 'filth of the flesh' from those meted out (in **mesure** and with calm deliberation: 215, 247) to other sins. The grimly unhurried execution of His will here is of the latter kind (cf. 213–15); though it now marks, not a forbearing God, but an offended deity stage-managing a dramatic portent that will shock the miscreants out of their oblivious complacency. The **warnyng** is not such a one as to give Belshazzar a chance to mend his ways by alerting him to possible consequences, but a *pre-announcement* (see *MED warning* 1b) of a penalty already incurred (1721–40).

1505–20 These lines are based on Daniel 5:3: *and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them* [the vessels]. The poet has responded to this confluence of holy vessels and drink-filled revelry by creating a scene of riotous splendour, full of glitter, sound and movement: the stampede for the cups, the bell-like ring of rich metal as Belshazzar's molls cast off the lids with carefree merriment and the wassail cry announcing the sportive effort to drain the cups.

1508–12 For the collocation of **Weye** and **wyne**, cf. 1420, *G* 1403, and for that of **bolles** and **birlen**, cf. 'In bolus birlutte thay the wyne' (*Avowing* 730). The vocabulary is that of a conventional topos: scenes of drinking in hall are common in medieval verse, from the stately festivities of *Beowulf* onwards; the serving of drink from *wunderfatum* [splendid vessels: *Beowulf* 1162] is, however, usually a ceremonious affair, not the unseemly competitive scramble it here becomes.

1512 **uch man for his mayster makes alone**: *macche* was used most commonly in contexts either amorous ('to mate') or antagonistic ('to be the opponent of'). The basic sense ('to form one side of a paired relationship') figures in this oeuvre in socioeconomic application: at *Pa* 99, where it refers to a

conveyer–traveller contract; and here, where it refers to servee–server (or **mayster** and **man**) roles – in which the servers enter into no corporate relationship with the assembled company, each **man** [servant] ‘matching up’ only with his own **mayster** as servee.

- 1514 rok:** as Menner observes, the meaning ‘citadel, fortified castle’ was common for French *roche/roque* and Latin *rocca*, and that appears to be the sense here, though in ME the usage is recorded elsewhere only in the Wycliffite Bible, where it translates Latin *arx* (1 Maccabees 3:45, 4:2). Anderson, following Morris and Gollancz, glosses the word ‘crowd’ and refers it to *ruke* [heap, pile], which appears in this sense and spelled with *o* at *DT* 7149, but it is there used in a dismissive sense, ‘the common rabble’, which would be inappropriate here after **riche**. The repetition of that adjective from 1513b, however, is uncharacteristic, and renders the a-verse at 1514 suspect.
- 1518 And then are dressed:** the a-verse lacks an alliterative stave. Various reconstructions to provide one (e.g. *drinkes*, *dere*, etc) are possible and have been suggested.
- 1521–8 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone** (Daniel 5:4).
- 1521 likked ... lykores swete:** cf. ‘[Drones in a beehive] lurken and lick the liquor that is swete’ (*Mum and the Sothsegger* 984). The verb is associated with sensuality by this poet (cf. 1000, *G* 968), and it here links this literal action in the exemplum with the figurative warning in the *moralitas* which precedes it (‘Then eft lastes hit likkes ... ’: 1141).
- 1523 stokkes and stones:** the slight alteration to the Vulgate wording (see n. to 1521–8) recurs at 1720, both instances reiterating the **stokkes and stones** of 1343 (added to the Vulgate) and making for a consistently scornful emphasis.
- 1525 gaules** has not been convincingly explained. The most attractive interpretation is that of Anderson, who suggests derivation from OE *gal/gagol* [wanton], a word used in OE of both lasciviousness and drunkenness (which would give it contextual relevance here), and one which survived into ME as an adjective (*gal*, *gol*) and as an abstract noun (*galnes*, *golship*).
- 1525, 1528 nevenen and foryeten** stand in antithesis: the former was used of pious ‘calling upon the Lord’ (cf. 410) and the latter of want of mindful prayer to God (*MED foryeten* 2(a)); cf. ‘forgeyttes hym noyghte, / bot nevyn hym in your nede’ (*Metrical Paraphrase* 3129–30).
- 1526 Belfagor and Belyal and Belssabub** are heathen deities or devils (the two were considered interchangeable: see n. to 1341–

4) mentioned in the Bible, though not in Daniel 5 (which tells the story of Belshazzar's feast): *Baal-peor*, rendered *Belphagor* in the Wycliffite translation, in Numbers 25:3, when the Israelites defect to his worship (a fact recalled at Psalm 106:28 and Hosea 9:10); *Belial* in the recurrent designation of the infidels as 'sons/children/men of Belial' (an expression used of e.g. the Sodomites at Judges 19:22); and *Beelzebub*, 'the prince of the devils', at Matthew 12:24 (Mark 3:22, Luke 11:15).

1529–49 *In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another* (Daniel 5:5–6). The ghostly phenomenon has in the poem been quite precisely visualized – as an eerie transposition of (now obsolete) processes of writing whereby letters were incised into parchment or wax tablets: 'we ben wont ... by a swift *pyntel* to fycchen *lettres* ... in the *pleynesse* of the table of wex or in parchemyn' (Chaucer, *Boece* 5.m4.19). The **playn wowe** (1531) here provides a surface similarly 'playn as parchemen schaven' (1134), on which a **pyntel** (1533) as usual scratches in **lettres** (1536) with a digging action and scraping sound evoked by the verbs **Pared** (1536), **graven**, **rasped** and **scraped** (1544–6). The comparison between writing and ploughing (1547) was one which had suggested itself to other medieval writers (Solomon 1997: 94) – for writing by incising was slow and laborious, a fact here drawn on to create painfully drawn-out action: parallel variation spreads the one act across three verbs (**wrytes ... Pared ... portrayed**) at 1534–6, and the process continues while Belshazzar watches mesmerized (1544–6).

1531 **palayce pryncipal**: the phrase, recapitulated as 'this mansion rial', occurs also in Lydgate, *Life of Our Lady* 2.529–30, and in *Cleanness* it similarly renders Vulgate *aulae regiae* [royal palace]. Latin *principalis* does occur in this sense ('relating to a prince, imperial') elsewhere in the Vulgate (e.g. Esther 2:18).

1532 An expansion of Vulgate *contra candelabrum*. The detail acquires extra significance and solemnity in the poem, in which climactic pride of place has been given to the **candelstik** among the assembled treasures (see n. to **1481–8**). Its sacred but shamefully disregarded role of illuminating the entrance to the divine presence in the *sancta sanctorum* is thus now seen to be grimly reasserted by a God now reasserting His own disregarded (1528) presence.

- 1533 **apered a paume with poyntel in fynGRES** translates *apparuerunt digiti, quasi manus hominis scribentis* (Daniel 5:5; see n. to 1529–49). **paume** is here used of the hand itself (cf. *PP* B.17.142, 174), as Latin *palma*, and the cognate OE *folma*, could be.
- 1534 ModE cannot convey the ambiguity of reference in **he**. *He* or *she* could be used in ME to refer back to things (originally, to nouns of respectively masculine or feminine grammatical gender) as well as to persons; **he** here thus stands poised between the disembodied **paume** (1533) that is its antecedent and the assumed but invisible *person* to whom it belongs.
- 1538–43 For the vivid rendering of psychological impact or shock, largely through Germanic vocabulary, cf. *Pe* 171–9 and *G* 2369–72. The thickened alliteration here (1539–40, 1543) contributes to the effect. For the effects of loss of muscle tone implied in the Bible (see n. to 1529–49), the poet has substituted a sudden convulsive cramp (Belshazzar’s knees going into spasm rather than knocking), the result of a shock that is metaphorically expressed as a heavy blow, a **strong stroke** that **strayned** [crushed, squashed] his joints, the verb being used in the sense it bore when used of the compressing effect on a weaker substance caused by the heavy impact of a stronger (as an anvil is *strained* by the hammer, or grass by the tread of cattle: see *MED streinen* v¹ 5(b)). For **cluchches** (1541) used of muscular spasm, cf. ‘he fel ded ... That nevere so moche ... he ones quycched, Ne his lymes ones clecched’ (*Laud Troy Book* 8918–20).
- 1538 On *dase*, and its association with paralysis from shock, see n. to *Pe* 1085.
- 1539 Cf. ‘All falowis his face & his flesche trimblis’ (WA 5434).
- 1541–92 The quatrains as marked in the MS (by two slanting lines in the left margin: see p. xxxii) in this passage run one line out from sense divisions; we have re-arranged so as to restore agreement between the two.
- 1542 **plattyng**: glossed as ‘wringing’ in *MED* and referred to *platen* v³ [to plait]. But the verbal noun here is surely from *platen* v¹ [to strike] and designates beating rather than wringing of hands: cf. ‘Men mighten seen there hondes wrynge, Palmes beten ...’ (*Kyng Alisaunder* 2795–6). The often-adopted emendation of MS *lerns* (*lers* with nasal contraction over *r*) to *leres* [cheeks, face] produces poor sense, avoided only by the more radical emendation by A&W of **displays his lerns** to *dispyses his leres* [mistreats his cheeks].
- 1543 **ryth that rores**: **ryth** is the only recorded survival into ME of OE *hrither* [bullock, steer], *hrith-* in compounds. Human cries are

also compared with those of a bull that **rores** [bellows, roars] at *Troilus* IV.239–41 and *Havelok* 2439.

- 1545 runische:** see n. to *G* 304. The adjective is ultimately from OE *run* = ‘rune’ – a character from the (pre-Christian) alphabet used for carving – which developed the meaning ‘secret, mystery’. Something of the original sense of the word seems to be preserved here, as at *StE* 52, where it also refers to an undecipherable inscription (‘Bot roynysche were the resonnes that ther [on the tomb] on row stoden’).
- 1546 scrof** (possibly related to ‘scurf’) is recorded nowhere else, and context is the only clue to its meaning (?rough, ?sharp).
- 1547** Cf. ‘my cultir to kerve ... the forewis’ (*PP* A.7.96). For the comparison with writing, see n. to 1529–49.
- 1550–85** *The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then came in all the king’s wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonied* (Daniel 5:7–9). The poet has rendered this sequence twice (producing a version similar to that found in Josephus, *Antiquities* X.xi, where Belshazzar’s offer of rewards is similarly inserted between efforts at decipherment made by two groups of magicians): Belshazzar’s search for interpreters widens (1551, 1559), his promise (1564–73) is made in response to the failure of those first summoned, and his agitation (1558) at the lack of results from the first consultation (1555–7) becomes more frenziedly violent at the similar blank drawn from the second trawl (1580–85).
- 1553 frayes my flesh:** cf. ‘Than was he fraid in his flesche’ (*WA* 3586). The expression refers to the bodily effects of fear; cf. 975.
- 1556** For the collocation of **lore** and **langage** in this context, cf. ‘versis in variant lettirs, Sum in Latens lare, sum langage of Grece’ (*WA* 5777–8).
- 1558 brayde ner wode:** the idiom *breyde wod* = ‘go mad’ occurs elsewhere: cf. *William* 2096, *Sir Ferumbras* 2099.
- 1559 bede:** Morris’s emendation to *MS ede*. ‘Bid’ certainly figures as a non-alliterating and unstressed word elsewhere in the *MS* (cf. 500, 630, *Pa* 187).
- 1559–61** and 1575–9 expand, to ludic effect, *magos*, *Chaldaeos et aruspices* and *sapientes* at Daniel 5:7–8. The Chaldeans were

known to have been skilled in astronomy (see e.g. *Three Kings of Cologne* 56) and were therefore especially associated with astrology and the occult arts.

- 1566 make the mater to malt my mynde withinne:** for the idiom (which here translates Vulgate *interpretationem ejus manifestam mihi fecerit*), cf. *Pe* 224 and n. Subjunctive **make** is sometimes emended to *makes*, since the verb is syntactically parallel with **wysses** at 1564; but the subjunctive mood accords better than the indicative with *fecerit* in the Vulgate (to which **wysses** was an addition) and is idiomatic in the context of a hypothesis introduced by **he that** [anyone who: 1564].
- 1570** The phrase **pure clergie** refers to *clergie* or learning in its strict sense (*MED* sv *clergie* 3(a)): intellectual command of sacred matters, moral or spiritual. Belshazzar is a pagan, of course, and what he means by ‘divinity properly so-called’ is probably ‘divining’ in its strict sense (cf. **devine lettres** at 1561): that is, the interpretation of omens, portents, dreams, etc. The **prymate and prince of pure clergie** is a rationalizing addition to the Vulgate promise of nearly supreme national status: the poet’s successful ‘clerk’ is to be the equivalent of the Archbishop of Canterbury, ‘primate of all England’, who was next after the king in rank.
- 1571 of my thryvenest lordes the thrid:** for *thriven* with respect to public status, cf. ‘He spak al of his dygnete, How wel that he was threven’ (*Theophilus*, stanza 3). **he schal hatte** [be called, i.e. rank as]: the MS reads simply *he schal*, which is sound ME for ‘he shall be’, and as such explains why his omission of a line-ending stave went unregistered by the scribe, and why the line went unemended by all editors except Gollancz (who supplies *be* after *schal*).
- 1573 tee** (MS *penne*): in the MS, the b-verse lacks an alliterative stave. The poet’s focus appears to be on processional precedence (cf. **to ride** at 1572).
- 1575–9** See n. to **1559–61**.
- 1576 sathrapas:** the Vulgate term *satrap* in fact designates a secular dignitary, but it seems from the entries in *MED* to have been understood as referring to clerical status and the learning associated with it.
- 1577 Wyches and walkyries:** valkyries (minor goddesses who conducted slain heroes to Valhalla) belong to Scandinavian mythology and strictly have no business in ancient Mesopotamia. But the word figured in OE as a designation for various classical goddesses of warlike nature (Bellona, the Furies, the Gorgons), and also developed the general sense of ‘witch’ or ‘sorceress’; the

alliterative collocation *wiccan* and *waelcyrrian* is itself in fact recorded in OE (see *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* sv *waelcyrge*). It is possible that **walkyries** in due course became ungendered as well as decontextualized from Norse mythology. But, since the word is otherwise unrecorded after the Anglo-Saxon period (until reintroduced as *valkyrie* in the eighteenth century), and since **Wyches** could be male or female, there can be no certainty as to whether the paired terms here represent men or women. The involvement of women in ‘clerical’ matters would not in itself have seemed odd to a poet familiar with the Old Testament, which features both prophetesses and witches, including the renowned *phitonissa* or Witch of Endor (1 Chronicles 10:13, 1 Samuel 28:7–25).

- 1579 Sorsers of** (MS &) **exorsismus**: the scribe presumably confused *exorcist* and *exorcism*. The construction with **of** is supported by **Devinores of demerlaykes** in 1578; cf. ‘dyvynour of the trinite’ (PP A.9.302) and ‘Of Artmagique Sorceresses’ (CA 8.2602). *Exorcism* [the conjuring up or banishment of spirits] is referred to elsewhere as the province of *sorcerers*: Christ was accused of being ‘a sorcerere, and thorough the prynce Belzebub cast oute the develles of folkes’ (cited in *MED* sv *sorcerer*), and the Witch of Endor, who raised the spirit of Samuel at Saul’s command, did so by ‘sorcerie’ (CA 6.2387).
- 1580–96 chorles** (1583), like **lewed** (1580), pointedly lowers the rank of the **clerkes** to that of the labouring and uneducated classes. The poet plainly enjoys the discomfiture of these repeatedly so-called **clerkes** (1562, 1575, 1579, 1583, 1631), who are revealed by his roster (1576–9) to be simply a gang of dabblers in the black arts (practices always strictly forbidden by Christian **clerkes**: see CT X.600–607); their lack of true theological insight is exposed in what the poet (by these additions to the Vulgate) represents as a kind of divine joke, which strips them of even the most basic qualification for clerkly status by revealing them to be (1596) **lewed lettres to rede** [ignorant in the art of reading].
- 1581** In the **lether** of the poet’s **lyft bote**, the **clerkes** (1579) would have found nothing more informative than his ‘left heel’, used as a similarly derisive measure of incomprehension in Trevisa’s complaint that schoolchildren now understand ‘na more Frensche than can hir lift heele’ (II, 161).
- 1582–4** Belshazzar is here wilder with rage than is his counterpart in the Bible: *Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonied* (Daniel 5:9).

- 1582 kerves his wedes:** an understandable but pointless instinct to rend one's clothes under the impulse of rage or frustration is referred to at *Pa* 526–7. It is here an addition to the Vulgate which, however, preserves the 'costume' of the context, for the gesture was particularly associated with the Judaic culture from which the Bible emanated: cf. 'Cayphas ... For scorn carf his owe clothes [Matthew 26:65], as gywes wolleth by wone [custom]' (*Southern Passion* 1222).
- 1584 hyed:** we assume (with Morris, Menner and Moorman) that MS *hez*ed is the past tense of the verb *hie* (elsewhere in the MS spelled with *i/y*, but cf. the variation in the MS between *hi*ze and *he*ze). *Hien* is well attested in the required sense (hastening on somebody or something, giving urgent commands for the speedy performance of some act). The suggestion by A&W that *hez*ed represents the past tense of *hoten* [swear, threaten] is attractive in terms of sense, but that past tense always occurs elsewhere in the MS as *hi*zt(e).
- 1586–96** *Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house: and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed* (Daniel 5:10). The poet's additions stress the courtesy in gesture and word (1591–2) of a queen already established (in another addition: 1351–2) as a virtuous lady unworthily neglected by Belshazzar for his concubines.
- 1588–9** Reflecting the Vulgate, *pro re quae acciderat regi* [because of what had befallen the king], which differs slightly in sense from the AV's *by reason of the words of the king and his lords* (Daniel 5:10).
- 1591 kneles on the colde erthe:** cf. *G* 818, *WA* 5055.
- 1594 into** (MS *in*) **lenthe of dayes** expands the Vulgate *in aeternum vive* into an alliterative verse – but expands it 'in style', for the idiom derives from Vulgate *in longitudinem dierum* (Psalms 22:6, 92:5, etc) and is likewise used as an echo of biblical style at *Pe* 416. **into** restores b-verse metre; cf. the Wycliffite Bible, where the Latin phrase is translated 'into (the) length of days'.
- 1597–1618** Based on Daniel 5:11–12: *There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding* [scientia; cf. syence: 1599] *and wisdom ... was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding* [prudencia, intelligentiaque], *interpreting of dreams, and shewing*

of hard sentences [*ostensio secretorum*; cf. **open uch a hid thing**: 1600], *and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar* [Baltassar]: *now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.*

- 1598 **gostes**: the plural is due to the use of *gost* (Vulgate *spiritus*) to refer to each of the gifts of understanding conferred by the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:2–3), among which the *spiritus sapientiae et intellectus*, *spiritus consilii* and *spiritus scientiae* correspond to the *sapientia*, *intelligentia*, *scientia* (**syence**: 1599) and **counsayle** (1605) attributed to Daniel here and/or in the source (Daniel 5:11–12).
- 1604–5 See Daniel 2 and 4 for Nebuchadnezzar’s two cryptically emblematic dreams and how Daniel **devised** the events they foretold (after the Chaldean astrologers and wise men had been consulted in vain). Daniel foretold, but did not actually rescue Nebuchadnezzar from, **caytiffe wyrdes**. The poem presents him more as a confessor figure – bringing spiritual aid and stabilizing counsel (1601–2, 1605–6) to a distressed king – than does Daniel 5:11–12, where the emphasis is rather on the royal recognition earned for Daniel by his miraculous powers.
- 1607–8 *Spread* is often used of the presence of the Holy Spirit: cf. ‘The Holy Gost ... spret ... himself in oure hertes’ (*Book of Vices and Virtues* 119). **spyryt ... Of the ... goddes**: the variation between the singular god (1598) and the plural reflects the perceptions of a polytheistic culture and occurs also in the Vulgate: cf. *spiritum deorum sanctorum* (Daniel 5:11; cf. 4:6/9, 15/18), although it is a singular god Daniel is understood as serving (Daniel 2:47, 6:20).
- 1611 **of derne connynges**: probably an epithet to be taken with the name (‘Daniel of the occult arts’). The only other recorded instance of **demed** = ‘called’ occurs at 1020, where the epithet (the Dead Sea) again reflects a name.
- 1616 **wynne him thee with worschip**: the MS reads *wynne him with þe worschip*, but **worschip** is preceded by the definite article only when following or preceding a further specifier. The translation suggested in the footgloss is essentially that of Anderson, though he retains the MS reading. For **wynne** and **wayne** in the senses assumed, cf. 617 and *G* 1032, 2091 (and for the alliterative collocations of the line, cf. 1120 and *G* 984).
- 1618 **also cler**: MS *also*. The emendation, first made by Gollancz, restores sense as well as alliteration.
- 1619–40 *Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father*

brought out of Jewry? I have heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom [sapientia; sapyence: 1626] is found in thee. And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing: And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations [obscura interpretari; unhyles uch hid: 1628], and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet [purpura; purple: 1637], and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom (Daniel 5:13–16).

1621 *clanly had haylsed*: on *clanly* here, see p. 88.

1622–4 Belshazzar's greeting (added to the Vulgate) is politer than would be expected from him to a Jewish captive – and shows him anxious to ingratiate himself by such respectfulness as the queen had recommended (1616). The matter introduced at 1623 by *Hit is tolde me* (rendering *audivi* at Daniel 5:14) recapitulates very closely the information he has just received from her. The lines are the equivalent of *Tu es Daniel de filiis captivitatis Judae, quem adduxit pater meus de Judaea?* (Daniel 5:13), but echo the closer rendering of those words inserted into the queen's speech at 1611–14.

1622 The meaning of *umbe-brayde* (written as two words in the MS) is not clear. The gloss 'embraced' (given by Anderson and Vantuono) is consistent with the usual sense of *umbe* [around, surrounding], but that of 'accosted' (given by other editors) is better supported by attested senses of *breiden*, which is regularly used of speech in the sense of 'burst or come out with' (see *MED breiden* (1) 12d and *abreiden* (1) 3c; cf. *brayd* = 'outburst' at 1507). *Beau* (MS *leue* [dear]) *sir*: Gollancz's emendation of *leue* to *beau* (for which the *MED* records the variant spellings *beu* and *bewe*) assumes a plausible scribal error and provides a well-attested expression (cf. G 1222) that supplies the missing alliterative stave.

1632 *with quoyntyse conquere hit*: cf. 'Quayntise overcomes alle thing' (Mannyng, *Chronicle* I.8683).

1633 *hit to resoun brynges*: cf. 'the name of this glorious Seynt is thus browt unto reson: a morer of the city above, a gret encreser of the blis of hevene' (Capgrave, *St Augustine* 2; cf. *DT* 2399).

1634 *tede*: usually interpreted as 'tied (= joined together)', and as influenced by *ligata* [knots] *dissolvere* [*dissolve doubts*] at Daniel 5:16 (see n. to 1619–40). But the connection with the Vulgate

phrase is tenuous and the past participle of *tie* appears elsewhere in the MS as *ty3ed* or (in rhyme at *Pe* 1013) *ty3t*. Anderson's theory of a unique survival of OE *geteod* [ordained, fated] is also unpersuasive.

- 1640 baroun upon bench** (Vulgate *princeps*, AV *ruler*): rendered by Anderson (followed by A&W and Vantuono) 'A lord of the king's council', presumably on the basis of the locution 'baron of the bench'. But '*upon bench*' is a different expression and is used of position at the hall table (cf. *G* 351), and more specifically of seats at the dais or head of the table, as in the present scene, where the phrase is used only of Belshazzar (1395, 1499; cf. **on dese** at 1517), who has excluded all except himself and his concubines from the dais (1399–1400).
- 1641–52** Based on Daniel 5:17–19: *Then Daniel answered and said before the king ... O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down.* Omitted, however, are Daniel's opening words – *Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation* – which contradict his apparent acceptance of the promised rewards at 5:29 (translated in the poem at 1741–52). The poet evidently decided to sacrifice Daniel's dignified declining of Belshazzar's bribes in favour of the bestowal upon him of regal splendour. This is consistent with patterns of emphasis particularly evident in this third exemplum (in which ejection from and reception into kingly state is a mark of heavenly judgement on cleanness or uncleanness: as with Zedekiah at 1225–32, Nebuchadnezzar at 1672 and 1701–8, Belshazzar at 1738–40).
- 1642** Daniel implies that Belshazzar stands in need of a higher power to **rede** [direct] him than his own compliance with the specific request that he should *rede* [interpret] the writing (1633) can supply. Since the poet does not include the dignified snub of Daniel's opening words in the Bible (see previous n.), he has substituted another means of indicating the prophet's proud independence (cf. **Derfly** at 1641).
- 1647–50** The two antitheses are in the AV, but the first (1647–8) was not in fact available to the poet from the Vulgate, which has *interficiebat* [slew] ... *percutiebat* [struck] (Daniel 5:19) for the AV **slew ... kept alive** (see n. to **1641–52**; Menner refers the discrepancy between the Vulgate and the AV to 'the double

meaning of the original Hebrew’).

- 1653–6 The lines are independent of the Vulgate and consistent with 1321–8 (likewise independent), which also attribute the superior grandeur of Nebuchadnezzar to an inner acknowledgement of the even greater grandeur of God.
- 1655 **And while that was clegt:** after **that**, *comfort* is inserted by Gollancz, and *counsayl* by A&W. But what the now missing alliterative stave might originally have been can only be guessed at.
- 1657–79 *But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him* (Daniel 5:20). The Bible is more summary than the poem precisely because it is summarizing events which have already been recorded – three times: in Nebuchadnezzar’s cryptic dream of the incident (Daniel 4:10–17); in Daniel’s interpretation of it (4:20–26); and in the fulfilment of its prophecy a year later (4:28–37). It is only now, at the point where it makes its fourth appearance in the Bible, that the poet gives his single version of the story, a version which draws on those earlier passages in the Bible (especially Daniel 4:28–37).
- 1661–8 *The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?* (Daniel 4:30). On the contrast between Nebuchadnezzar’s **blasfemy** (1661), which God punishes but ultimately forgives, and Belshazzar’s more mean and stupid blasphemous desecration of the vessels, see pp. 90–91. It is Nebuchadnezzar’s responsiveness to aesthetic grandeur and beauty that prompts both the instinctive respect for the vessels and their god (1309–18) and the blasphemous **pryde** (1657) in his own creation in this complex and powerful character.
- 1661 **to blame** (MS *on to blame*): Menner and Anderson attempt to explain *on* as going with **blame** [utter impiety against], but the word order is difficult and ME *blame* is not elsewhere construed with *on*. Prosodic considerations confirm scribal error. Since in his alliterative verse the poet appears to have pronounced final *-e* in infinitives, this would, unemended, be the only b-verse in the MS where pronunciation of infinitive *-e* would result in the metrical irregularity of two long dips (Putter et al. 2007: 99).
- 1669–76 *While the word was in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen* (Daniel 4:31–2).
- 1671 Cf. 669, where the parental firmness of the word **inogh**, with its

mixture of authority and mildness, again marks God's tone when dealing with sinners not guilty of 'uncleanness' – with which Nebuchadnezzar's blasphemy (as opposed to Belshazzar's: 1713, 1721) is never equated; cf. also 215, 247 and *Pa* 346.

1673–80 The details of the terrain (**mor, wasturne, bent, cowntre unknowen, fyr frith**) are independent of the Vulgate; all except the penultimate item refer to uncultivated wasteland.

Nebuchadnezzar's incorporation into wilderness and the animal nature he takes on (1681–98) gain extra significance in a poem which consistently equates spiritual worth with social and courtly refinement (35–48, 609–44, 797–832) and with civilized culture and art (1441ff), and which, in this third section, correlates loss of worldly court and kingship with loss of acceptability to the heavenly Lord (see n. to **1641–52**).

1675 bite (= graze; cf. *Pa* 392) corresponds to Vulgate *comedes* (AV: **they shall make thee to eat**) at Daniel 4:29/32; 1683–4 similarly reflects Vulgate *comedebat* [he ate] (AV: **they fed him with**) at 5:21.

1676 The wolves are from an English culture in which they had always figured as epitomizing the lawless savagery of life outside civilized society; the wild asses are from the Vulgate *onagri* of Daniel 5:21 (see next n.).

1677–1700 *And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will* (Daniel 5:21). The same material occurs also at Daniel 4:15–16, 25, 32–3. Daniel 4:33 adds the details on which 1696–9 are based: **and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws**.

1678–9 **Fro the solie of his solemnete and is out cast** are from Vulgate *de solio regni sui* and *ejectus est* at Daniel 5:20–21 (see nn. to **1657–79** and **1677–1700**).

1680 fyr frith [fir forest]: **fyr** is by most editors interpreted as the positive or comparative form of adjectival *far* and glossed 'remote', but **fyr** nowhere else in the MS appears as a form of *fer* or *ferre*, and 'far into a far(ther) wood' gives awkward sense. The reading here follows *MED* and Vantuono.

1684 hay: Anderson so understands MS *ay*, which would indeed appear to be a form of or error for *hay*, found as the equivalent of Vulgate *foenum* (Daniel 4:29/32, 5:21) in the stories of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar in Chaucer's *Monk's Tale* (*CT*

VII.2172, 2217). **hay** occurs alliterating with both **horse** and **erbes** in *Pa* 394, 438.

- 1686 The line (cf. 'Fro seven dayes ben seyed' at 353) renders *donec septem tempora mutantur super eum* at Daniel 4:20/23.
- 1687 **thye**: MS *thyze* (emended to *fytherez* by A&W) has been variously, but to date unconvincingly, explained. It probably refers to head or facial hair and is perhaps to be connected with OE *thufa* [plant, tuft], *thuft* [thicket], ME *thufe* (which is used of leaves and seems to mean 'bushy'); for the movement of the lines follows the growth of Nebuchadnezzar's hair and his consequent growing transformation into an animal: from his head (1687–8), to the matted thatch between shoulders and groin (1689–90), to the twining 'tail' that then falls to his feet (1691–2), followed by a frontal view of hair growth (eyebrows, beard, whiskers) at 1693–5.
- 1688 **dubbed** and **digit** were generally used of ennobling or beautifying array or ornamentation (cf. 1743, 1753, *Pe* 202) and so here re-emphasize the antithesis of 1685.
- 1689 For **fyltered** as applied to hair in the sense of 'matted, tangled', cf. 'His fax and his foretoppe was filterede togeders' (*MA* 1078); cf. also *Ipomadon* 6147. The rare verb *felten* (apparently from the noun *felt*) occurs in the sense required here ('cause to adhere') in *Ancren Riwe* 156: 'I schal ... felten [*adherere faciam*] thi tonge to thi palate.' **fyltered** and **felt** have been interpreted as adjectival past participles, but could be past tenses parallel with **flosed** [? formed a fleecy coat], which seems to be cognate with modern *floss*, but is of obscure derivation.
- 1690 **schyre-wykes** [loins]: explained by Menner as representing *schore/schare/schere* (the regular ME word for 'groin') and *wyke* [corner, angle] as used of body parts (cf. *G* 1572).
- 1692 **clyvy** is interpreted as a verb by A&W (following Menner), who gloss the line 'where many (hairs) clung as though plaster stuck it together'. But **clyvy** reads unnaturally as a verb, not only because the subject has to be supplied but also because the inflection -y is only found in this MS in infinitives. It would thus appear, as Gollancz suggests, to be the only recorded occurrence of OE *clife* ['cleaver', burdock] between c.1100 and the reappearance of the word as *clivre*, *cliver*, *cleaver* in the mid-fifteenth century. **clyde** similarly figures in *MED* (sv *clithe*) as the only occurrence after the twelfth century of OE *clitha*, a word occurring in medical contexts as a term for a 'plaster' or 'poultice'.
- 1694 **bresed**: the verb (related to *bresse* [bristle]) appears in ME only here and at *G* 305, 'Bende his bresed browes' (cf. 'His browe as brestles wore': *Roland and Vernagu* 480). Alliteration is thickened

in 1693–4, as in 1687 and 1689, which also refer to the shaggy hair which gradually envelops Nebuchadnezzar.

1695 under campe hayres: cf. ‘With kempe heeris on his browes stoute’ (CT I.2134). Since Nebuchadnezzar’s eyebrows are dealt with at 1694, **under** (which bears alliterative stress) has here been assumed to be adverbial, the **campe hayres** referring to tufts growing on the cheeks below the eye-sockets: ‘underneath (were) stiff hairs’.

1697 pauue: MS *pa* + 4 *minims* + *e* is usually expanded to *paune* or emended to *paume* but is more likely to represent ‘paw’ (the second *u* in **pauue** representing *w*; cf. MS *scheued* for *schewed* at Pe 692). For the application of *paw*, and the epithet **grymme** (1696), to a bird’s claw, cf. the eagle ‘with hys grymme pawes stronge’ at Chaucer’s *House of Fame* 541.

1699–1700 This moral appears on all four occasions on which the story is told in the Vulgate (see n. to **1657–79**), where the same *donec* construction (Til: 1699) also figures (Daniel 4:14/17, 22/25, 29/32; 5:21). Nebuchadnezzar learns in much the same hard way as Jonah that he is not autonomous (cf. *Pa* 286, 296).

1701–8 Based on Daniel 4:34–7 (for which there is no equivalent in the account of the incident given by Daniel to Belshazzar in Daniel 5:18–21): *And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever ... At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me [figura mea reversa est ad me]; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven.*

1707 Hawerly: a rare word, from ON *hagr* [skilful, handy], which appears also at 18 (and as adjective at G 352 and 1738), there too in relation to fitness for courtly and civilized society. **hue:** MS *hwe* is emended to *hwef* [headdress] by A&W, who see here a reference to Nebuchadnezzar’s crown and to Vulgate *in regno meo restitutus sum* at Daniel 4:33/36. But that part of the Vulgate is amply rendered by the other lines in this quatrain, and the present one corresponds rather to *figura mea reversa est ad me* in the same verse (see previous n.). Nebuchadnezzar’s resumption of human from animal form is aptly fused with his resumption of kingly status, and there seems no difficulty in assuming that **hue** renders *figura* and bears the larger sense of ‘visible form’, which the noun certainly could have (*MED* *heu* 3(a)): i.e. **in his own**

hue = ‘in the visible appearance proper to it (= “his head”, which had become like that of an animal)’.

1709–20 *And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; But has lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified* (Daniel 5:22–3).

1713–14, 1717–18 The biblical *vessels of his house* is twice expanded upon to produce an antithesis of the same rhetorical structure as 1445–50, and thus to re-emphasize the contrast drawn at 1489–1500.

1713 *vesselles avyled* occurs also at 1151. *unclene*: the polysemy of *clene* is exploited to create parallels between the indecent and unfitting (*MED clene* 2(c)) use of the vessels by Belshazzar and the (710) *unclene* [unchaste, sexually perverted: *MED unclene* 2(b), (c)] practices of the Sodomites. See also n. to 1721.

1714 *of firste*: possibly ‘from the first’ (see *MED of prep* 5(a)), but probably simply ‘first’ (for redundant *of* before adverbs, see *of prep* 24(e)).

1717–20 As the Vulgate here (Daniel 5:22–3) recapitulates its own previous wording at 5:3–4 with regard to Belshazzar’s double desecration of the vessels (using them for a binge and lifting praises to false gods *thereon* [over them]), so too does the poem: see notes to 1420–36, 1521–8, 1709–20 for the Bible, and, in the poem, cf. 1718 with 1445, and 1719–20 with 1343, 1522–4.

1717 *for beverage* (MS *beverage*): the word *thede* normally means ‘people, nation’, and attempts to discern in it a different word that might provide an antecedent for *That* (= the vessels) in 1718 are not convincing (Anderson suggests *thede* = ModE *thead* [brewer’s vessel], while A&W read *th’ede* [the blessed ones]). The insertion of *for* restores sense, allows *thede* to be taken in its normal signification, and enables the vessels, represented by *That* (= those things which), to serve as the object of *has thou broght* (as at 1433: ‘Bryng hem now to my borde, of beverage hem fylles’).

1721–40 From Daniel 5:24–8: *Then* [*Idcirco*; *And for that*: 1721] *was the part of the hand* [*articulus manus*; *The fyste with the fynGRES*: 1723] *sent from him; and this writing was written* [*exaratum est* [‘ploughed’, incised: see n. to 1529–49]; *rasped*: 1724]. *MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN* [*MANE, TECHAL,*

PHARES: 1727]. *This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished* [complevit; *fulfylled*: 1732] *it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting* [minus; *ful fewe*: 1735]. *PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.*

1721 *frothande fylthe* echoes the *fylthe* and *yestande sorwe* of the Sodomites (845–6). The expression refers in both cases to a desecration of a courtly feast that is simultaneously a desecration of what is sacred to God (His angels and His vessels).

1724 On *runischly*, see n. to 1545.

1726 *uch figure* [written symbol]: cf. *StE* 51–3 (where the reference is likewise to letters of a language not recognized: see n. to 1545): ‘golde lettres ... Ful verry were the vigures’.

1727 At f.56^v, one of the two full-page illustrations found at the beginning of the poem depicts Daniel kneeling before the king, who is himself pointing to the words, which are represented in the picture along with the disembodied palm holding the pen; and the enigmatically crucial three-word message is marked in the MS by a cross against the present line in the left margin. *thrynne* [three], as adjective or noun, is always used in this corpus of three things that form a unity or a united group: the divine Trinity (606, 645), the three kisses of the lady (*G* 1868) and the poet’s own threefold exemplification in this poem of what he presents as the same moral (1805). The words here are similarly represented as a message in triplicate (*in thrynne*), announcing *upon thre wyse* (1728) essentially the same doom (loss of his kingdom) to Belshazzar. The poet has thus discerned in the threatening message a rhetorical threefold variation on a theme similar to the doom he sees himself as having announced to the ‘unclean’ *upon thrynne wyses* (1805). See pp. 92–3.

1728 *thretes thee of thyn unthryfte* could mean ‘threatens you with your doom’, but the sense ‘rebukes/denounces you for your wickedness’ (*MED* *threaten* 2) is more probable: although such cognates as *unthriftly*, *unthriftily*, *unthriven* can all refer to wretchedness or misery as well as to wickedness, *unthrift* itself is recorded only with reference to the latter. A double meaning is, of course, entirely appropriate.

1730–39 In Josephus (*Antiquities* X.x), Daniel explains *Maneh* as a Greek signification for *number* (cf. 1731), *Thekel* as *weight* (cf. 1734–5) and *Phares* as another Greek-derived term for *fragment* (indicating the breaking up of the realm: cf. 1738–9).

1731 *clene*: the sense of this key word here is given as ‘whole, entire’ in *MED*, but it seems rather to be ‘exact’: cf. *MED* *clenli* adv 2(d) (‘distinctly, clearly’) and *clene* in its aesthetic sense of

‘faultless(ly), with minute precision’ (see e.g. 310, 1455).

1736 **to frayste the trauchte**: ‘Probably not “to test, prove, the truth” (edd. and *MED* sv *fraisten*), but rather a conventional expression, “to seek the truth”, equivalent to modern “to tell the truth”. Cf. [G] 355: “who laytes [seeks] the soothe”, used similarly’ (Anderson).

1738 **deprived**: for the contextual sense ‘deprived of *kingdom* (i.e. deposed)’, cf. 1227 and *Pe* 449. **worthes** [will be]: the present tense of *worthen* [become, come about, be] occurs largely in the subjunctive (cf. 60, 727, 1056); indicative **worthes** also generally has reference to (less hypothetical) future events, as here and at *Pa* 200.

1740 **of menske schowved**: the parallel with line 44 is of obvious significance.

1741–52 Based on Daniel 5:29: *Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler* [quod haberet potestatem tertius] *in the kingdom*. See n. to 1641–52.

1742 **as forward hit asked**: this provides an explanation of the uncharacteristically honourable response by Belshazzar to the bad news and condemnation just received from Daniel. Standing by pledges was a crucial point of regal honour: the principle is observed even by the similarly unsympathetic king (of Fairy) in *Sir Orfeo* 463–70.

1746–7 For **bowe** (in its political sense of ‘be subservient to’) in a similar context, cf. *Guy of Warwick* 3076 (‘Al tho that ben to me serveinde, Ichil thai be to thee boweinde’).

1750 **in burgh and in felde** here means ‘everywhere’: cf. ‘what wemen love best in feld and town’ (*Wedding of Sir Gawain* 91).

1752 **that folwed him tille**: ‘who attended upon him (i.e. Belshazzar: cf. 1747)’ is the meaning that suggests itself, but *follow* in this sense does not usually take the preposition *to/til*, which may imply pursuit to a specified spatial point – and that is actually the force of *to* in the example cited by Anderson (in support of the above gloss), ‘He followit to him haistely’ (*Rauf Coilyear* 419). The present b-verse should probably therefore be glossed ‘(all those) who made their way to him (= Daniel)’.

1753–96 Elaborated from the tersest of postscripts to the story in the biblical source: *In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom* (Daniel 5:30–31).

1758 For **farande fest** (reinforcing **solemnete** at 1757) cf. the reference at *G* 101 to ‘uch farande fest’. Both Belshazzar’s and

Arthur's feasts are full state banquets – and, as such, must go on (cf. *G* 467–75) despite a traumatic interruption that leaves a death-sentence hanging over one of the chief diners; compare the planned three-day feast (likewise involving guest dignitaries who have travelled some distance) with which Theseus feels obliged to proceed, despite the fatal accident which has befallen Arcite, who would have been the guest of honour (*CT* I.2700–740). The diplomatic necessity leads in all three texts to an expressive counterpointing of public festivity against a known impending disaster.

- 1759 The ominous falling of night (as of a gathering storm) is heightened by a semi-personification of the **skues**: the collocation of **ble** with **bryght** and/or with one or other of the often overlapping verbs related to ModE *bleach* and *blacken* refers almost everywhere else to a radiant or greying face: cf. 'Hwer is Paris and Heleyn that weren so bryhte and feyre on bleo?' ('Mayde Cristes' 66), 'Hire bleo bigan to blakien for the grure [terror] that grap hire' (*Seinte Marherete* 22).
- 1760 For *drive* applied to the rising and gathering of nebulosity, cf. 'a derknes thare drafe and demyd the skewes' (*WA* 561).
- 1761 **the lyst of the lyft**: the reference seems to be to the lower regions of the sky, though no comparable applications of **lyst** [boundary, edge, arena] are recorded in *MED*. Anderson puts a pause after 1760 and reads 1761 with 1762; but 1761 makes poor sense as a chosen route home and good sense as an account of night mist, which would gather especially in **low medoes** (i.e. ground near water: cf. Trevisa, *Properties* II, 961, 'in lowe medes, in mareys [marsh], and in watry place').
- 1762–4 Anderson (followed by Vantuono) wrongly assumes that these cannot be Belshazzar's guests, 'who would hardly be in need of *soper*, but the ordinary people of the town who hurry home to escape the worsening weather, and whose simple pleasures contrast with the luxury of the palace'. But the public banquet (like most royal feasts) was a *daytime* event, a *dinner* (traditionally partaken of at noon), which would be followed by a **soper** (the evening meal); cf. the royal feast in the Squire's Tale, a daytime dinner (*CT* V.263–5) which is over by early afternoon and is followed by a *soper* in the early evening (290–307). Nor is singing after supper a folksy scene of simple people (in whom this aristocratic poet shows little interest), but a regular part of *after soper* entertainments among the well-off (cf. *Troilus* III.610–16). Belshazzar's guests here return, after the feast, to their lodgings in the town (1762) and to their evening **soper** engagements (1763), which continue late into the night (1764).

1765 It was customary, in the higher ranks of society, to be conducted to one's sleeping quarters by servants who would carry torches to light the way (cf. *G* 1120, 1989–90). Since the verb *carry* is not elsewhere used in this oeuvre, MS *caryed* has been assumed to be, not ModE 'carry' (Anderson and A&W), but a form of **kayred** (cf. 1478); cf. MS *caryez* (= *cayres*) at *G* 734; *cary* (= *cayr*) in Douglas, *Aeneid* XII.xi.136; and MS *heyred* for **heryed** at *C* 1786.

1766 See nn. to **1500** and **889–92**.

1771–2 The Vulgate refers only to Darius, who is declared to have succeeded to Belshazzar's throne (see n. to **1753–96**); the **prince of Perce** is Cyrus, who was in fact the leader of the campaign and conqueror of Babylon; the non-biblical **Porros of Ynde** is an ally of Darius in legends of Alexander, which would have formed another tradition from which the poet would have been familiar with the splendours of Babylon, which Alexander conquers (see *WA* 5610ff) after defeating the Persian Emperor Darius and Porus of India (3308–787).

1775 on throwene hepes: cf. 504.

1776–8 The Bible implies a surprise capture by night (see n. to **1753–96**), to which the poet has given military plausibility by assuming seizure by scaling; for historical instances of seizure and raids conducted at night through scaling ladders, see Warner 1968: 99, 117.

1778 Stelen stilly ... ere any steven risid: cf. the secret military exit (as opposed to the **entre** here: 1779) at 1203: 'stel out on a stille night ere any steven risid'.

1778–88 In imagining this sequence, the poet may have been influenced by a similar scene in Guido delle Colonne's *Historia* 233, where the Greeks enter Troy secretly by night and proceed to slaughter the sleeping citizens and to pillage their homes, a passage rendered thus in the alliterative version of the *Historia*: 'Buernes in hor bednes britnet all naked ... Bre kyn into bildynges britnet the pepull ... Robbet there riches, reft hom hor lyves' (*DT* 11933–40).

1784 Ascry scarred on the skue: cf. 'He is so scoymus of that scatthe He scarres bylive' (598), 'As a scowt-wache scarred so the ascry risid' (838). It seems unlikely that these three instances of **scarr-**represent separate verbs, though that has sometimes been argued in the very varied explanations offered by editors. The poet is probably using what he conceived of as a single verb with a range of senses drawn variously from *skerren* [frighten, alarm] and *skairen* [send out]. That some fusion of the two verbs has occurred is suggested by the fact that the collocation at 838,

scowt-wache and **scarred** [alarmed, aroused], appears elsewhere (*DT* 1088, *MA* 2468) as *scoutwatch* and *skair* [send out]. The intransitive usages at 598 and 1784 share a reference to some sudden forceful flinging and dispersing motion outwards or upwards: **scarres bylive** means (as implied by the next line, ‘He may not drye to draw allyt, bot drepes in haste’) ‘lashes out’ (to disperse and scatter any source of **scathe**), while **scarred on** at 1784 similarly seems to indicate ‘scattered upwards by a forceful burst’.

1786 heryed (*MS heyred*): see n. to **kayred** at 1765.

1787–92 The humiliating details of Belshazzar’s death are independent of the Vulgate (for which see n. to **1753–96**).

1788 his blod and his brayn: cf. 1248 and n.

1791 doghty: A&W and Anderson gloss ‘bold’, but that sense of the word is confined to contexts of combat. The adjective derives from OE *dugan* [be of avail] and retained its earlier sense (‘of worth’) when applied to morally or socially ‘excellent’ or ‘important’ persons (including women and non-combatants); and that sense suits the contrast obviously intended with 1792.

1795–6 The political measures taken by Darius towards consolidation of his power are (like his military tactics) additions that lend verisimilitude to the biblical events.

1801–3 See n. to **1641–52**. Correlating honour or shame in this world and the next was a common topos that has particular pertinence in the present poem. Cf. the words of Briseis to Calchas (who has defected to the Greeks): ‘thi worship is went and wasted for ever ... If men laith with thi lyf, lyffying in erthe ... the shall happon in helle hardlaikes mo, For thy filthe and thi falshed with fyndes to dwelle’ (*DT* 8117–24).

1804 To loke on our lovely Lord: the phrasing recalls the first Beatitude, which the poet announced as his base text or theme at the start of the poem (25–30). Cf. especially 28: ‘For he schal loke on our Lord.’

1805–12 The concluding lines produce a strong effect of circularity in their reprise of words and images from the texts introduced at the opening (see [p. 93](#)).

1810 schyn see His owne face (*MS schyn se his face*): the b-verse in the MS lacks a long dip; for the emendation, cf. 595b.

1812 in His sight is a common phrase, but has here special pertinence to the Beatitude taken as the theme text (27–8) and recalled at 1810.

NOTES TO PATIENCE

- 1 **poynnt**: ‘condition, quality’, not ‘virtue’; the examples collected in *MED* under the spurious sense ‘good quality, virtue’ (10(c)) show merely contextual application to virtue(s) of other senses (‘state’ or ‘item in a set’).
- 2 **When ... ben**: since **ben** (instead of *are/arn*) in this MS usually indicates futurity or subjunctive mood, it is presumably here the latter (triggered by the indefinite sense of **When** [whenever, if]).
- 3 **swelme** occurs only here and (in a similar collocation) in WA 872: ‘Lete aswage ... the swelme of his angirs.’
- 4 **ho**: the feminine pronoun picks up the feminine gender of both **Suffraunce** and **PACIENCE** (from Latin *patientia*) and anticipates the personification of the virtues of the Beatitudes as courtly ladies at 30ff.
- 5–6 The poet plays on the double meaning of **suffer** (see pp. 197–8): ‘bear patiently’ (5) and ‘experience pain’ (6). With line 6, cf. the gnomic advice given to the dreamer at *Pe* 344: ‘Who nedes schal thole, be not so thro.’
- 9 **highe Masse** was the formal sung Mass performed on Sundays and major feast days. The **halyday** referred to is probably All Saints’ Day (1 November), one of the mandatory holidays which all were required to observe by attending Mass and abstaining from work (see n. to G 536–7): the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3–10) formed the Gospel reading for this feast (*Sarum Missal* II, 554).
- 10 **con teche**: cf. *And he opened his mouth, and taught them* [*docebat eos*], **saying** (Matthew 5:2). The periphrastic past tense formed with auxiliary **con** often occurs for metrical reasons: it here ensures (with the preceding -y in **meyny**) the single long dip required in the b-verse.
- 13–14 **Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven** (Matthew 5:3). The Beatitude was usually interpreted as referring to voluntary poverty. Since the b-verse must have one long dip and the alliterative line must end in only one unstressed syllable, **poverté** in 13b requires stress on the second of its three syllables.
- 15–16 **Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth** (Matthew 5:5; the AV reverses the Vulgate order – which the poem follows – of this and the next Beatitude).
- 17–18 **Blessed are they that mourn** [*lugent*]: **for they shall be comforted** (Matthew 5:4). *lugent* was traditionally interpreted (as

here) as referring to penitential sorrow.

- 19–20 *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled* [saturabuntur] (Matthew 5:6). The expansion *ful of alle goode* may echo the Magnificat (Luke 1:53): *He hath filled the hungry with good things* [bonis].
- 21–4 *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God* (Matthew 5:7–8).
- 25–6 *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God* (Matthew 5:9).
- 27–8 *Blessed are they which are persecuted* [persecutionem patiuntur] *for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven* (Matthew 5:10). *that con her hert sterve* is an adaptation of the Beatitude which is central to the poem's treatment of impatience as lack of self-restraint under both pain and joy; the connection of *patience* with both the fortitude of this eighth Beatitude and with self-control represents a traditional association of ideas going back to biblical times: cf. *He that is slow to anger* [patiens] *is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit* [dominatur animo suo] *than he that taketh a city* (Proverbs 16:32). For the expression used in the poem, cf. Rowlande and Ottuell 162, when restraint of rage against a messenger is urged: 'thyn herte that thou wolde sterve'.
- 30 The reference is to a passage in the *Roman de la rose* (7721–38) in which the lover is advised to gain his lady's favour by imitating her and modelling himself upon her; the same passage is paraphrased at C 1057–68.
- 31–3 The demands of alliteration have affected the sequencing, causing the **Mekenesse** of the second Beatitude (15) to exchange places with **Pyty**, which here has the broader sense of Latin *pietas* [sense of duty] and represents those who 'hunger for right' in the fourth Beatitude (19). The personification of virtues as noble ladies was common in the literary and visual arts (cf. PP B.5.618–23) and partly reflects the feminine gender of abstract nouns in Latin.
- 37–9 Since the first and the last lines of *Patience*, *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain* are also **fettled in on forme**, it is not surprising that the poet should have been struck by the verbal interlinking of the first and last Beatitudes – which some earlier commentators had also noted: 'the eighth maxim returns, as it were, to the beginning' (Augustine 9).
- 39 **quest** could be taken in its legal sense and glossed 'judgement' (Anderson) or in its hunting sense (as at G 1150, 1421) of 'pursuit' or 'search' (Bateson and A&W). Supporting evidence for the assumption of a hunting metaphor is provided by **enquylen**,

which (like *aquilen*) could also be used as a hunting term, meaning ‘to flush, hunt up’. *MED* gives no other examples with prefix *en-*, but there are instances in Twiti’s *Art of Hunting* 20, 24 (Putter 2006: 374–5). **quoyntyse**: ‘(spiritual) wisdom’ is the main meaning, but the hunting metaphor would suggest the word bears also its equally common sense of ‘skill, art’.

43–4 The logic is similar to that of the gnomic proverb cited at *PP* B.10.438: ‘For *quant OPORTET* vient en place il ny ad que *PATT*’ [For when *MUST* comes on the scene there is nothing for it but to *SUFFER*].

43 **enpresses** derives from AN *empresser*, which is found both with inanimate subjects (sickness, death) in the sense ‘oppresses’ and with animate subjects in the sense ‘subject to force, harass’. The word is thus suited to the transition that takes place here (as the poet translates his allegory into non-allegorical terms) from personified poverty (41) to non-personified poverty (43).

45 The coupling of poverty and patience is traditional (and is reinforced by the metre in alliterative verse: cf. *PP* B.10.340, 12.61). Noting that the first Beatitude mirrors the last, the thirteenth-century *Speculum Morale* (578D) similarly states that ‘paupertas comitem debet habere patientiam’ [poverty should have patience as a companion]; the poet, however, arrives at this orthodox dogma by a more complex and punning logic: since poverty necessarily entails ‘suffering’ (44), it **behoves** the poor man to **suffer** patiently (46).

52 **to ride other to renne to Rome**: since Rome was the seat of papal government (except during the Pope’s exile in Avignon from 1309 to 1377), English clerics were routinely dispatched there to pursue business on their lords’ behalf (Jacob 1968). The journey was so arduous and hazardous that ‘Rome-running’ acquired proverbial status as an unpleasant task (Andrew 1982). The coupling of **ride** [ride] and **renne** [go on foot] is common; cf. the servant commanded in *Lament* ‘to ride and to renne To my wif’ (81–2).

53–6 Cf. ‘A slogh messagere ... That charged ys with lordes errand, Yyf he go nat as he ys sent He ys wrthy to be shent. Man that weyl spedyth hym yn dede, And messenger smart at nede, They shul stonde before the kyng, And haue mede to here askyng’ (Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne* 4813–20).

53 Like its Latin equivalent, *murmur*, **gruchyng** figured frequently among ‘sins of the tongue’ as the verbal manifestation of impatience. Jonah is in fact adduced as an example of *murmur impaciencie* in the *Speculum Laicorum*: ‘Murmur may occur with respect to the command of a superior ... it is impatient to

murmur against his wholesome demand. Thus Jonah murmured against the command of the Lord and was handed over to be devoured by the whale' (cited by Craun 1997: 85); cf. *CT* IV.354, where Griselda is required to submit absolutely to her husband's will and 'nevere ... to grucche it'.

- 56 **bongre** occurs elsewhere in ME only in the phrase *bongre, malgre* [willy-nilly, whether one likes it or not], which might suggest that it should here be read as parallel with the preposition **maugre** (54); most editors have therefore treated it as a preposition and interpreted **bongre my hyre** as meaning 'in accordance (with the terms of) my hire'. Our interpretation of it as a noun follows Burrow 1989; with 55b and 56b, cf. 'et es foly For to lufe your enemy Yife ye gete a velany And mawgre to youre mede' (*Sir Degrevant* 585–8).
- 61–4 **Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying** (Jonah 1:1).
- 61 The beginning of the exemplum is marked in the MS by a decorated capital *H*. New sections are similarly announced at 245, 305 and 409. On **termes of Judee** (cf. *terminos Israel*: 2 Kings 14:25), see p. 200.
- 63 Cf. 'Then Godes glam to hem glod that gladed hem alle' (C 499). **unglad** gives a somewhat comic twist to the unsurprising collocation of **God-**, **glam**, **glod**, **-glad**.
- 65–72 **Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness [malitia] is come up before me** (Jonah 1:2).
- 70 **I may not abide** (contrast 7 and 419): this remarkable ascription of impatience to God makes the point, not only that anger is a powerfully intuitive emotion, but also that the Omnipotent does not face the same checks and curbs against acting on it that humans do (6, 45–56); it is just as well, therefore, as He Himself later points out, that, with the power to destroy cities at a stroke, He is more able to soften His wrath voluntarily than man is (520–23).
- 71 **venge me on her vilany**: cf. (with reference to a secular lord and a military setback) 'To weng him of the welany' (Barbour, *Bruce* IX.550).
- 73–88 Jonah's thoughts have no scriptural source, but there are parallels in other biblical poems. Cf. Marbod of Rennes's twelfth-century *De Naufragio Jonae Prophetae* (col. 1676): 'Forte timens fatum, non iuit vaticinatum. Nam quia portaret quod plebis corda gravaret, Nuntius interitus, satis foret undique tritus, Vel gladio stratus, vel forsitan igne crematus' [perhaps he did not go and prophecy because he feared his fate. For, since he would carry news that would aggrieve the people, the messenger would be

killed, or beaten, or put to the sword, or perhaps burned at the stake]. Cf. also *Metrical Paraphrase* 13849–53: ‘Jonas herd tell of Nynyue, / and of the folk so fell thei wore, And yll doers in all degre, / therfore he dred hym to come thore.’

- 77 **typpede**: past participle of ME *tippen*. Previous editors have glossed ‘extreme, consummate’, but there is no dictionary evidence for such a sense. In the *Catholicon Anglicum* (389) the word is glossed as *cornutatus*, which could have the sense ‘aggressive, violent’: cf. ‘tam graves erant excessus eorum et cornuta superbia’ [so serious were their crimes and their overbearing pride], cited sv *cornutus* (6b) in *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*.
- 78 **tee** (MS *com*) restores the missing alliterating stress and the chiming contrast with **ta** [take]. The archaic *tee* [go] is common in alliterative poetry: see 87, 416, and cf. *SJ* 847, 1162, 1182, where the variants (*turne*, *went*) clearly illustrate its vulnerability to scribal substitution.
- 89–101 Expanded from Jonah 1:3: ***But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.***
- 90 **port Japh**: on Japh (also called ‘Port Japh’ at *SJ* 296), see p. 200.
- 93–6 On this addition to the Vulgate, see pp. 202–3.
- 101–8 Independent of the Vulgate, but nautical scenes were a popular topos in narrative verse in general (e.g. Wace 11191–233) and the alliterative tradition in particular: see e.g. *MA* 736–55, 3652–71, which actually refers to the sailors themselves talking nautical shop (‘Of theire termys they talke’: 3654) and is similarly full of specialist *termys*. The Old Testament ship has been thoroughly medievalized to become a single-masted **coge** (152), the most common cargo vessel in northern Europe in the fourteenth century. On departure, the sailors first raise the **crossayl** [sail-yard – a pole which is slung from the mast and on which the sail is laced]. Before the sail is unfurled, the sail-yard is made fast with **cables** [ropes]; the sailors then weigh anchor at the **wyndas** [windlass – a drum with levers for raising weights]; the **bawelyne** [bowline – a rope attached to the edge of the sail and pulled tight to keep the sail steady when sailing close to the wind] is drawn tight on the **sprete** [bowsprit – the horizontal pole projecting forward on the bow]. Then the sailors tug at the guys or **gyde-ropes** to unfurl the sail, and the canvas drops. In order to gain the wind, they **layden in on laddeborde** [turned the ship to port], and the wind catches the belly of the sail.

Anderson and A&W gloss **layden in** as ‘they put in (their oars)’ and assume that the sailors bring the ship round by rowing on the port side. That gloss is based on a single occurrence of the phrase in *Havelok* 719 (‘leyn in an ore’), but, as Smithers shows in his edition, this does not mean ‘they laid in oars’, but ‘they set course to starboard’ (*on ore* = to the side of the rudder, starboard). Ships were turned to the wind, not by rowing, but by pushing the rudder over and adjusting the sail. See Putter 2004 and, on the nautical details, Friel 1995: 93 and Hutchinson 1994: 15–64, 183–90.

- 104 **spare bawelyne**: we follow Anderson in taking **spare** to mean ‘spare, used for special cases’ (the bowline would only be used when sailing to windward). This sense of the adjective appears to have been a specifically nautical usage; cf. Falconer sv *spare*, ‘An epithet applied to any part of a ship’s ... furniture that lies in reserve’, and Shakespeare’s *Comedy of Errors* I.i.80–81, ‘A small spare mast, Such as sea-faring men provide for stormes’. In lieu of a bowline, a wooden pole was sometimes used (Friel 1995: 93–4) and **spare bawelyne** is glossed by Morris as ‘spar-bowline’.
- 109–28 These lines have no equivalent in the Vulgate, but appear to be indebted to the tradition of biblical verse paraphrases, in which denunciations of Jonah’s folly also occur. With 113–17 cf. e.g. Marbod (col. 1676): ‘O animum vatis mirandae simplicitatis! Si procul esse putat Dominum sibi, dum loca mutat Qui complet totum nihil huic valet esse remotum’ [O, what astonishing naivety for a prophet’s mind! As if he thought he could be out of God’s reach by change of location. But it is impossible to be remote from him who extends over everything]. Cf. also *Metrical Paraphrase* 13857–60: ‘This was a foull foly / when he so fondly dyd; / God ys ever all mighty: / from hym may noyght be hyd.’
- 111 **planted**: probably influenced by Psalm 93/94:9 (part of a passage quoted in full at 121–4): ***He that planted [plantavit] the ear, shall he not hear?*** The verb is retained in the Wycliffite Bible translation (‘He that plauntide the ere’), and it appears that the sense ‘form, create’ was taken over into English: cf. Trevisa (with reference to the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet) ‘kynde hath iplauntid [Latin *composuit*] thes parties for he schulde the lightloker fele coolde and hoote’ (Trevisa, *Properties* I, 118).
- 114 **put him in plyght of peril**: for the collocations, cf. ‘Wold have put him to the plit for perell of all’ (*DT* 8018).
- 116 **Samarye**: Samaria (a district in southern Israel) is the first of three geographical details which the poet has added to the Vulgate which show that he was aware that the historical Jonah

was assumed to come from the northern Jewish kingdom of Israel, not the southern one of Judah (see pp. 199–201). Japh lay near the border between the two kingdoms.

- 118–20 David (whose history is recounted in the Books of Samuel) was often portrayed with a crown and a harp – emblemizing his status as the first **kyng** of all the Jewish tribes and the (supposed) poet of the Psalms of the **Sauter** – and is here imagined iconographically **on dese** (a phrase which could, as here, mean ‘on throne’). Since the Psalms formed the first textbook at school, as well as a major part of the daily liturgy, phrases from them would have been heard **oft**.
- 121–4 *Understand, ye brutish [insipientes] among the people: and ye fools [stulti], when will ye be wise? He that planted [plantavit] the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed [finxit] the eye, shall he not see?* (Psalm 93/94:8–9). The same verses are also quoted at C 581–6.
- 122 **he**: the interpretation ‘even the one who’ follows Burrow; most previous editors had emended to *ye*. The emendation of MS *stape fole* to **stape in** [advanced in] **folly**, and the interpretation of *fole* as the noun ‘folly’, follows Gollancz: the requirement of a line-ending dip rules out the noun *fol* [fool] or the adjective *fol* [foolish]. The expression **stape** [stepped] **in**, however, is otherwise recorded only in the phrase *stap in age* [advanced in years].
- 124 **bigged** preserves the register of *finxit*, for the Latin verb *figere*, when applied to the plastic arts, had the sense ‘fashion, mould, model’.
- 125 **that dotes for elde**: there is no mention of Jonah’s age in the Bible or in commentaries on the Book of Jonah. In MS illuminations and medieval wall paintings, however, he is often represented as aged. See e.g. Randall 1966, figure 290.
- 131 **that ilk craft He carf with His handes**: on the presentation of God as a craftsman, cf. 123–4 and n. to 496; cf. also C 697–700. **craft** here has a sense similar to that which it bears when, in *StE* 346, flesh is referred to as ‘that ... craft that covert the bones’ (i.e. a phenomenon or device that occurs in nature).
- 129–56 Expanded from Jonah 1:4: *But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken*. On the storm scene, see Jacobs 1972. It is a conventional topos in ME alliterative poetry (cf. *DT* 1983–2026) as well as in classical literature, where the *locus classicus* is Virgil’s *Aeneid* (I.82–107), a description which has many resemblances with the one in *Patience*. A number of other versifications of the Book of Jonah also include this rhetorical set

piece (Rougé 1964), the Virgilian amplification of the storm in Marbod's *De Naufragio* providing the closest comparison.

- 132–6 The personification of the winds here pertinently presents them as obedient servants (unlike Jonah). The tradition of personifying the winds goes back to classical literature: Juvenal includes the 'old trope' of 'what the winds are up to' among the stale themes regurgitated by second-rate poets (I.9).
- 139, 141 For the collocation of **rud-** with **rak-**, cf. *G* 1695 ('In red rudede upon rak rises the sunne'), and for **wynd-** and **wrastel-**, cf. *G* 525 ('Wroth wynd of the welkyn wrasteles with the sunne').
- 143 **breede**: MS *breed* has been interpreted as past tense of 'breed' (Morris) or the noun 'brood' (Kluge). But, since the b-verse requires a long dip, it must represent a trisyllabic word (*breëdē*), and has therefore here been interpreted (with *MED*) as the participial adjective (= alarmed), from OE *bregan* [alarm, terrify], ME *breën*.
- 145–9 With 145 and 149, cf. *SJ* 63–4 ('So the wedour and the wynd on the water metyn, That alle hurled on a hepe that the helm yemyd'). The Flood in *Cleanness* also, predictably, provides some parallels: with 145, cf. *C* 371 ('For when the water of the welkyn with the worlde mette'), and with 146–7, cf. *C* 423, 491.
- 151–2 **suppe behoved The coge of the colde water**: cf. 'Scho [a holed boat] suppit huge watir of the layk' (Douglas, *Aeneid* VI.vi.64).
- 153 **Yet corven thay the cordes**: the sailors are cutting the ropes so as to relieve the ship of its anchor and sail, which has collapsed into the sea. This (like the jettisoning of the cargo: 157–60) was standard medieval emergency procedure, as the sea laws make clear: 'It happens that the master of a ship cuts away his mast in very bad weather ... and somehow it happens that they cut their cables and let their anchors go to save ship and goods' (*Black Book of the Admiralty* IV, 425–7).
- 156 **the lif is ... swete**: proverbial (Whiting L246).
- 157–68 A re-ordering and expansion of Jonah 1:5: ***Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god [deum suum] and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them.***
- 157–60 For similar jettisoning of valuables in order to lighten the ship in an emergency, cf. 'And for wothe of the worse warpit over-burde Mikill riches & relikes reft fro the tounne' (*DT* 13.412–13). See also n. to 153.
- 157 **bales** (MS *bale*): i.e. canvas-covered packs trussed with cords, used for shipping spices and furs (Hutchinson 1994: 93–5). Anderson retains the MS reading, noting that *bale* is often

encountered in the unchanged plural; however, in such cases it is always preceded by a numeral (after which uninflected plurals are normal: Mustanoja 1960: 58).

- 158 Bedding was commonly of straw; **fetherbeddes** were a luxury and owners would have them transported if they relocated (Woolgar 1999: 79).
- 163 **wery forwroght**: cf. 'He was wery forwroght ... Hade laburt so longe, hym list for to rest' (DT 5860–61).
- 164–7 From Vulgate *deum suum* (see n. to 157–68) the poet develops a colourful catalogue of pagan gods: **Vernagu**, a Saracen giant in the Charlemagne tales; **Diana**, the woodland goddess of classical mythology; **Neptune** (MS *Nepturue*), the legendary god of the sea; **Mahoun**, the prophet Mohammed, treated by medieval Christians as a heathen deity; **Mergot**, a pagan god who figures in the Charlemagne romances; the **mone and the sunne**, worshipped as divinities in pagan antiquity. This serves to highlight the conversion of the sailors from evident paganism to Judaism (237–40), a conversion that matches that of the Ninevites in the second half of the poem (405–8).
- 169–82 An addition to the Vulgate, in which the lot-casting is not proposed until Jonah 1:7, after Jonah has been chanced upon and, for no given reason, brought up on deck. In the poem, the proposal occurs earlier and all on board are sought out to take part: this provides a reason for both seeking Jonah and forcing him up on deck and gives the story more narrative cohesion.
- 182–6 Based on the end of Jonah 1:5: ***But Jonah was gone down into the sides [ad interiora] of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep [dormiebat sopore gravi]***.
- 182 **jowked** (< OF *jouquier* [to roost]) is a term from falconry (where it is still used: Mitchell 1900: 19). As a colloquially disrespectful word for 'sleep', it occurs also at *Troilus* V.408–9: 'non honour is to the To wepe and in thi bedde to jouken thus.'
- 185 **hurrok** occurs also at C 419 and in Capgrave, *Chronicles* 234 ('o boy ... fled to on of the Flemysch shippis, and hid him in the horrok'). Though it has been interpreted (following Sandahl 1951: 126) as 'rudder-band' (perhaps from ON *hork* [handle of a basket]), it is probably the same word as *thurrock* [bilge], described in *Myroure of Oure Ladye* as the 'place in the bottome of a shyppe wherin ys gatheryd all the fylthe that cometh in to the schyppe ... that place stynketh ryghte fowle and yt ys called in some contre of thys lond a thorrocke' (quoted in Sandahl sv *thurrock*; cf. Ellis 1985: 26). The form **hurrok** is probably a re-analysis of *thurrock* as *the hurrock*: note the variant *hurrok* for *thurrok* in CT X.360–5, 710–15. The 'bilge' both accords with the

portrait of an undignified prophet ‘slobbering in his sleep’ (186), and provides a parallel with Jonah’s later foul-smelling refuge inside the whale (273–80).

- 186** **sloumbe** is perhaps more likely to represent the adjective *sloomy* (= ‘torpid’; see *OED sloomy*, *MED slummi*, and cf. *P3A* 101: ‘I for slepeles was slome and slomerde a while’) than the noun *slume* < OE *sluma*, though the noun has been assumed by previous editors, who have interpreted **sloumbe slepe** (here and at 466) as a compound. But, apart from the uncertain form *slym* at *DT* 13821, there are no other attestations of the noun in ME. The Vulgate has an *adjective* + *noun* construction: *sopore gravi. sloberande he routes*: though *slober* is not otherwise recorded in this sense before the eighteenth century, *bisloberen* [drool] is well attested. Anderson mentions *PP* C.7.1 (‘Thenne cam Sleuthe al byslobered with two slimed yes’). Jonah is likewise depicted as snoring by early Christian poets (*Carmen de Jona* 54) and commentators: ‘Jona autem descendit in ventrem navis et dormiebat et stertebat’ [but Jonah descended into the bowels of the ship and slept and snored] (Jerome 191), and according to Philo it was his snoring that betrayed his presence to the ship’s captain (*De Jonae Oratione* 381). The detail derives ultimately from the Greek Septuagint (1:5).
- 187–204** *So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not. And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then they said unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou?* (Jonah 1:6–8). The poet transfers some material from verse 6 to his rendering of verse 8; see also n. to **169–82** on his repositioning of the original idea for the lot-casting.
- 187** **The freke him frunt with his fot**: cf. ‘Nauta sed accessit, pulsum pede voce laccessit’ [but the sailor approached and roused him with his voice after kicking him with his foot] (Marbod, col. 1677).
- 188** **Ragnel**: the MS can be read either as **Ragnel** or *Raguel*, and both are possible. **Ragnel** is a devil’s name in ME mystery plays (including the Chester Plays), but the name probably originated as a corruption of *Raguel*, the angel of vengeance in the apocryphal Book of Enoch.
- 189** **By the haspe-stede unhende** (MS *By þe haspede*): Anderson defends the MS reading as a phonetic spelling for *hasp-hede*, but

such a word is not attested in either spelling, and the verse is in any case metrically unsatisfactory. It is clear from 190 that Jonah is dragged up by the equivalent of his lapels: the sailor probably takes him by the front of his cloak, at the place where a clasp was often worn, but not by the clasp itself, which might not withstand the yank.

193–4 The confirmatory lot-castings (**serelyche ... aye**) are not in the Vulgate; see p. 204. How lots were cast in biblical times is not known, but the poet is probably visualizing something like the ‘circulating urn’ imagined by Prudentius (*Cathemerinon* 7.112): i.e. a vessel filled with tokens (one of which is marked) that is passed round everyone on board.

197–8 **What seches thou ... to lose us uchone** is interpreted as meaning ‘Why are you trying to destroy us all’ by Anderson and by A&W. But *what* meaning ‘why’, though it certainly occurs in ME, does not otherwise figure in the MS, and it seems preferable to assume that **What** has the same sense as in 196; so + *adjective/adverb* would normally, outside a *be* clause, be followed by a result clause (cf. 357), but with the infinitive here (following **lastes so luther**), cf. ‘He ... hent hire so hetterly to have hire a-strangled’ (WP 150).

199 For **governour** applied to a deity, see e.g. ‘Lauerd and godd he sal be ur, And ever mar ur governur’ (*Cursor* 18365–6).

205–16 *And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told [indicaverat] them. Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? For the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you* (Jonah 1:9–12). The poet changes the sequence of events in order to rationalize the action: the sailors’ panic follows, not Jonah’s announcement of his nationality and creed, but a differently worded declaration by him that the tempest will not cease while he is on board, because he has fled from God; the resulting alarm then leads immediately into the desperate resort to the oars that corresponds to Jonah 1:13.

205 **Israel**: the historical Jonah was a native of the northern Jewish kingdom of Israel, as is indicated in other geographical references the poet has added to the Vulgate. See pp. 199–201.

208 **at a word one**: cf. *O God ... who madest all things by thy word*

(Wisdom 9:1). Line-final **one** must be the adverb ‘alone’ and not the adjective ‘one’, which is always spelled *on* and never appears at line ending (where an unstressed syllable is required).

213–14 The obscure line 213 is usually understood to mean ‘He showed them by signs/indications which they understood (that)’ – which puzzlingly implies that gestures or something other than plain words are required for communication by Jonah of the information that he has fled from his god. But the poet has plainly assumed (at 195–212) mutual intelligibility between the sailors and Jonah, despite their obviously different nationalities. **ossed** (apparently related to OE *halsian* [adjure; augur] and ME *halsen* [supplicate; interpret]) appears elsewhere only in WA 2391 and 2434, where it means ‘prophesied’ and refers to predictions which have just been made (by a god and a prophetess respectively). Since Jonah is a prophet who has also just made a prediction, it seems best to interpret the verb as here too referring back to this prediction. *Unnyng* otherwise occurs only in *Ancrene Wisse* 107, where ‘god unnunge’ (= wishing someone well) is straightforwardly related to the recorded senses of *unnan* [grant, concede, permit]. No such relationship is observable in the present **unnynge**s, and the gloss ‘signs, indications’ is based simply on the Vulgate *indicaverat* which **ossed ... by unnynge**s corresponds to. We have here assumed that **unnynge**s has a sense related to that which the verb has in ON (‘tell, relate’) and have treated 213b as a result clause and construed **undernomen** with **That** in the next line (cf. *Cognoverunt ... quod* at Jonah 1:10). The sense of the two lines thus seems to be ‘He gave them predictions/warnings of this kind by confessions (about himself), with the result that they understood that he had fled ...’ The sailors’ terrified response (215), which has been shifted from its place in the Vulgate, certainly suggests that they connect the information of 213–14 with Jonah’s warning that the storm will not cease while he is on board (209–12).

216 **ruyt**: the verb, from ON, occurs only here in ME, and is an example of the lexical versatility which the poet brought to the demands of his alliterative metre.

217–24 *Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them* (Jonah 1:13).

217–18 The destruction of the sail has necessitated oars (carried by sail-powered cogs only for emergencies).

219 **Hef and hale upon hyght**: **hale** is sometimes emended to *haled*, since *hef* is elsewhere in the MS preterite. But variation between *on* and *upon* (+ *noun*) is generally metrically dictated: **upon** here

would not be required (to provide the long dip between the alliterating stresses) with *haled*, which would be a disyllable under conservative pronunciation. We have therefore assumed **Hef** to be present tense, of which it is a perfectly possible form, and have retained MS *hale*; the switch to historic present (after the preterite verbs of 215–17) is perfectly consistent with practice elsewhere in these and in other alliterative poems. Anderson construes **Hef** and **hale** as infinitives parallel with **to rowe** in 218.

- 220 **her note**: the MS omits **her**, which leaves the a-verse without a long dip between its alliterative stresses; C 381, ‘Bot all was nedles her note’, indicates the probable original reading, and we have emended accordingly.
- 225–8 *Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man’s life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee* (Jonah 1:14).
- 229–32 Expanded from Jonah 1:15: *So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging.*
- 230 **luchen**: the verb occurs only here. *MED* compares OF *lochier* [shake] and *eslochier* [dislodge].
- 233–40 *Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows* (Jonah 1:16).
- 233 A similar line describing a storm-tossed ship (from which valuable cargo has also been jettisoned) occurs in *DT*: ‘And the takill to-torne, tynt of hor godes’ (13417).
- 235 **the depe to serve**: cf. ‘Shipmen seide ... they moste serve the see. So hidously tho the wynde gan blowe ...’ (*Partonope* 9192–4).
- 238–40 The lines stress conversion to and conformity with the Judaic faith and the first of the commandments given to **Moyses** (‘Thou shalt have no other gods before me’: Exodus 20:3). Since Moses and the Judaic faith were regarded (in accord with Hebrews 3:1–6) as the forerunners and prototypes of Christ and the Christian Church, the sailors are in effect becoming proto-Christians who now worship **our mercyable Mayster** (238). Cf. nn. to 358, 375, 406.
- 238 **Mayster**: the MS reads *god*, which yields an a-verse with a non-alliterating second stress; emendation to **Mayster** (the literal translation of the Vulgate *Domino*) is supported by the collocation in C 1113: ‘Yis, that Mayster is mercyable.’
- 241–304 Expanded from Jonah 1:17–2:1: *Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed unto the*

Lord his God out of the fish's belly.

- 242 The point is key to the logic of the poem (cf. 6, 58, 113–14) and to the clear and consistent moral focus it gives to the Bible story.
- 245–6 The new section is marked in the MS by a decorated *N* (see n. to 61). The reminder of the point reached in the narrative reinforces the sense of a pause, and may indicate the provision of a midway break-point for a two instalment reading in the event of oral delivery (usual at this period: cf. *Troilus* II.81–4, 94–105).
- 247 **whal**: the Vulgate *piscis* [fish] was early assumed to be a whale. Cf. *cetus* in Marbod (col. 1677) and *Carmen de Jona* (85) and *whalle* in *Metrical Paraphrase* (13894).
- 250 **swepe**: for the sense ‘sweep up, sweep away’, cf. ‘And I was swythe in a sweven sweped belyve’ (WW 46).
- 251 **The folk yet haldande his fete**: the detail is faithfully preserved in the MS illustration of the scene (f.82^r), and may in fact itself have been prompted by visual representations which show Jonah still held by the ankles while his head has already disappeared inside the whale: see e.g. the illumination in the Lampeter Bible, Lampeter University Library, MS 1, f.325^v (reproduced on the dust jacket of Putter 1996).
- 254 **ridlande strondes**: **ridlande** occurs only here and at C 953, where rain is described as **ridlande thikke**. The word appears to be from OF *rider/rideler*; it is used of e.g. blood (to mean ‘run down’) and also of grooves, ripples or wrinkles (see Godefroy, *Dictionnaire*). ‘Forming streaks or lines’ seems to be a key part of the sense. The rain is clearly coming down ‘in stair-rods’ in *Cleanness*, and the **strondes** [currents] in *Patience* are forming observable lines of motion.
- 259–60 The poet’s engagement with the story at the literal, as opposed to the allegorical, level prompts this acknowledgement that it would stretch credibility if met with outside Holy Writ, since, by the laws of nature (**kynde**), Jonah could not have survived so long inside the whale; cf. ‘Although he ought to have been corrupted and digested in the belly of the whale and diffused through the veins and joints of the fish, [Jonah] came out safe and whole’ (Haimo of Auxerre 23).
- 264 Although **colde** and **care** frequently collocate (Oakden 1935: 275; cf. *Pe* 50: ‘care ful colde’), this is the first recorded occurrence of the now familiar coupling of **colde** and **comfort** (see Whiting C387).
- 269 **glaymande glette**: the reading *glaym ande glet* (A&W) is ruled out by metre, which requires a long dip in the b-verse.
- 270 **rode**: the obvious sense of ‘road’ is not recorded for ME *rode* (< OE *rad*), whose senses were mainly related to rides on horseback

and to sea voyages. Turville-Petre 2008, however, points out that place names (e.g. Old Rode in Cheshire) and charters plainly show an originally separate noun (from OE **rodu*) with the required sense ‘road, path’; and *rod/roid* = ‘path’ is well attested in Scots.

- 271 **hele over hed**: Whiting (H323) records later medieval analogues of the expression (the precursor of our ‘head over heels’), but gives this as the first attestation.
- 272 **Til he blunt in a blob**: it is not clear from what verb **blunt** derives, nor whether the MS reads **blob** (which Vantuono reports ultraviolet to have indicated) or *blok* (the reading of all other editors). The letter in question is ill-formed, and not quite like the scribe’s normal *b* or *k*. *Patience* forms the single entry for *blok* in *MED*, which glosses it ‘an enclosed space’, and compares Dutch *biloke*. The document cited by *MED* sv *blobbe* concerns fish or whale fat (‘soine drible seine that is called blob’), and the apparently related *blober* can also refer to fish or whale grease and is glossed *burbalium* [entrails, intestines] in the *Promptorium Parvulorum*. We have assumed it here refers to what Jonah registers as a piece of intestinal blubber, which yields a line (‘Til he blunt in a blob as brod as a halle’) comparable with 270 (‘Relande in by a rop, a rode that him thoghte’): in both, a word referring to some part of a whale’s intestinal anatomy is given scale by a similitude with some man-made structure.
- 276 **bylded his bour**: for the expression ‘build a bower’ (Oakden 1935: 271), cf. ‘Constu bulden a burh inwith thin heorte?’ (*Seinte Katerine* 68).
- 278 **navel**: this is the only occasion on which the word is applied to a *stomach*, for which **navel** is here in effect a poeticism: using words metonymically, i.e. in broadened sense, was one of the skills of the alliterative practitioner; cf. n. to **swowed** (442) .
- 287 **Haf now mercy of thy man**: cf. ‘For þi have mercy on thi man, thi methe we beseke’ (said to Alexander: WA 3229); Jonah’s **thy man** similarly makes a claim on the protection of his lord in the act of acknowledging him (cf. 282).
- 288 **a lord in londe and in water**: i.e. a lord as much in water as on land. *Lord in land* was a set phrase (Oakden 1935: 330) and *lord* and *land* a standard collocation (see e.g. G 1113), but Jonah’s situation prompts him to remind God that He is lord of both: cf. ‘Fader of folde and flod’ (*Pe* 736).
- 294 **Thre dayes and the night**: some editors emend MS *þe nyȝt* to *þre nyȝt*. But cf. ‘Threo dayes with the niht nou he the schal driue’ (*Joseph of Arimathe* 355), where the expression conveys the sense ‘three full days’.

- 296 The poet is here applying, with gnomic pithiness, a piece of existing wisdom: cf. ‘For manye man and womman, whyl they ben in anguysch and tribulacion and in seknesse, they knowin here God and heldin hem with God; but whanne they comyn to welthe of the world and helthe of body ... thanne they foryetin God ... as longe as they han here wyl and here prosperyte ...’ (*Sermons from Longleat* 88).
- 300 **wamel at his herte**: cf. ‘E cil qui trop laumbel [glossed *wameleth*] au quer [at heart, i.e. in his insides]: Sovent li estuet escouper [vomit]’ (Walter de Bibbesworth 1097–8).
- 305–36 **to thee have I cleped**: the poem has inserted material (281–8) to which this statement can refer back, but in fact the Vulgate Jonah has made no such prayer, his words at 305 being a semi-quotation of Psalm 129/130:1, *De profundis clamavi*. For Jonah 2:3–10 (on which 305–36 are based) are apparently a later interpolation into the Book of Jonah of psalmic material to which Jonah in his present plight can give a specific force; the most obvious parallels with precise psalmic verses are cited in the notes below.
- 305–8 **And said, I cried** [*Clamavi*] **by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice** (Jonah 2:2/3). The Book of Jonah here echoes Psalm 129/130:1, *Out of the depths have I cried* [*clamavi*] *unto thee, O Lord*, and Psalm 31:22, *thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee*.
- 309–12 **For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me** (Jonah 2:3). Cf. Psalm 42:7, *the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me*, and Psalm 69:1–2, 15.
- 310 **gotes of thy guferes**: cf. ‘gotes of golf’ (*Pe* 608). **gufer-** is not a form that otherwise occurs in ME, though it is well attested in OF (see *AND* sv *goufre* ‘abyss’).
- 313–16 **Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple** (Jonah 2:4). Cf. Psalm 31:22, *For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes*.
- 316 Cf. C 9 (‘Thay teen unto His temple and temen to Himselfen’) and see n. to *Pe* 460.
- 317–24 **The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth** [*abyssus*] **closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God** (Jonah 2:5–6/6–7); cf. Psalm 69:1, *Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my*

soul, and Psalm 86:13, *thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell*.

- 317 **wrapped in water to my wo-stoundes**: for *wrap* = ‘immerse’, see *MED wrappen* 4(b). The compound with *wo* + *noun* draws on a practice common in OE verse (e.g. *wea-tacen* [sign of woe], *wea-spell* [tidings of woe]), and seen also in early ME in Layamon’s *wa-daei* (4364). Cf. n. to **wyl-dremes** (473).
- 319 **The pure poplande hourle**: cf. WA 1277 (‘the pure populande hurle passit it umby’), which also contains the only other occurrence of the noun **hourle** in the sense of ‘surge of water’ (but cf. C 376, 413). The verb *popel* [bubble] is likewise used by Douglas of the ‘Popland and bulrand’ river Acheron (*Aeneid* VI.v.5) and of sludge that ‘up popyllit’ out of the sea (IX.xi.112).
- 320, 323 **man, renk**: as the distinction between God as *lord* and *master* and Jonah as *man* is carefully and consistently observed in the modes of address and reference in the poem (see pp. 198–9), these nouns must be appositional with **I** and **me**, not vocatives to God, as A&W and Anderson assume. Though God may be referred to in periphrasis as ‘The Wye that ...’, as at 111, He would not be addressed as ‘man’.
- 323–4 The antithesis between **right** [justice] and **mercy** was a commonplace (cf. *Pe* 669–72) and is the subject of the debate poem *Mercy and Right*.
- 325–8 **When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple** (Jonah 2:7).
- 329–32 **They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy** (Jonah 2:8).
- 329 The verb here is *me(d)len* [meddle, engage or concern oneself with], not *melen* [speak], and the collocation with **maystres** is discussed by Burrow 1989. **maystres** in this context is influenced by *mysteries*, and indicates ‘advanced theological speculations’. In Peter Idley’s *Instructions to his Son*, ‘Medle not of his maysterie [var. *mysteries*]; take the to thy crede’ (I.840), the contrast is plainly between (unhelpful) abstruse theological speculation and (safe) simple faith, and a similar contrast figures in ‘This World Fares as a Fantasy’: ‘Of Material Mortualite [the material world of mortal beings] Medle we and of no more Maistrie. The more we trace the Trinite, The more we falle in fantasye’ (93–6). Jonah, by profession a prophet, has engaged with the theological **maystres** which are considered in the above-cited texts to be of such dubious benefit to the layman (**I have meled with thy maystres mony longe daye**), but the collocation retains its negative implications, and its contrast with the simpler and safer knowledge that is introduced at 330 by **Bot now I wot wyterly**.

Although scholars have tried to see in 329 some penitent allusion by Jonah to his earlier rebellious resistance to God's commands, Jonah is here speaking rather as the regretful prophet (confessing that his professional career has not brought him any deeper wisdom than is available to all), and 329–32 may be paraphrased thus: 'As a prophet, I have long concerned myself with your more recondite truths, but I now know for sure just this, that one's business is to save one's soul through your mercy, and that all else is vanity.'

331 Alliteration of *v* with *f* occurs in this MS (e.g. G 1375, 1391) and in other alliterative poems when French-derived words are involved (Schumacher 1914: 62–8); this phenomenon probably reflects confusion between *v* and *f* in AN.

333–6 Based on Jonah 2:9 (itself based on Psalm 116:17–18): ***But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.*** The Vulgate Jonah offers, like the Psalmist, a metaphorical sacrifice, for the Judaic religion itself had come to deprecate literal in favour of figurative sacrifice (see e.g. Proverbs 21:3). The sacrifice in the poem is literal: the poet is at this point thus more Judaic than his source – especially since his **ful hole gifte** (335) continues the sacrificial logic and alludes to the need for the sacrifice to be 'whole' and 'without blemish' according to the elaborate rules governing it (see e.g. Leviticus 3:1–9). The poet similarly responds unembarrassedly to the sensuous exoticism of the sacrificial ritual in the old dispensation in *Cleanness* (505–12, 1445–8, 1497–8).

333 **I devoutly avow:** cf. 'And I sall make myn avowe devotly to Criste' (MA 296).

337–44 ***And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land [in aridam]*** (Jonah 2:10/11).

338 **spare drye:** for **spare** applied to terrain and meaning 'clear, bare, without much vegetation', cf. 'And sped hym spedely on the spare mure' (*Gologras* 112).

341 **swepe** [swept] **to the sonde in sluchchede clothes:** cf. 'In the slober and the slicche, slongyn to londe' (DT 12529). The verb *sweep* (strong in OE) usually has weak past tense in ME, but cf. MA 2508.

342 The line is discussed on pp. 203–4.

343–4 **The bonk that ... bode him biside Were:** **bonk** is here a collective singular with plural sense ('shores, slopes'). The plural verb **Were** (MS *wern*) is taken by some editors to indicate that **bode** must be a noun ('habitation'), but singular *bode* = 'abode' would be odd without preceding article, whereas past of *bide* =

‘be situated’ would be idiomatic (cf. *Pe* 75), and **bonk** takes a plural verb (MS *wern*) at *C* 379.

345–50 *And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee* (Jonah 3:1–2).

345 **wynd**: see n. to **swey** (429). **bruxles** is an ON-derived word that occurs only in northern texts (Kaiser 1937: 188) – the verb (= reproach) here and at *WA* 4789, the nouns *brixel* and *brixling* [humiliation] only in *Cursor* 10319, 28196.

346–7 The multiple negatives in God’s question prompt Jonah’s responsive **Yis**, which (by contrast with *yea*) was used in answer to questions involving a negative.

348 **me gaynes non other**: for the sense (‘there is no other course of action open to me’), cf. *WA* 181 (‘gefe thaim up the girdill [submit to them], us gaynes nocht ellis’) and *MA* 4303.

350 **Lause**: cf. *C* 668; *G* 1212, 1766, 2124; *StE* 178 (‘he loused such wordes’).

351–64 *So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days’ journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day’s journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown* (Jonah 3:3–4).

355 **ful joynt**: cf. ‘This cite was sothely, to serche it aboute, Thre iorneyes full iointly to ioynne hom by dayes’ (*DT* 1537–8). *Joint* when combined with *full* in these two cases perhaps gives the sense ‘continuously, without stopping’: the city perimeter was three days’ travel in *Destruction of Troy* even without pauses, and Jonah had traversed a third of the city (one day’s worth of its three-day-journey diameter) before he paused (cf. 356) to prophecy their doom to the Ninevites (i.e. by contrast with his earlier fears for his own safety, he now cuts off a quick escape route to maximize his audience).

358 Though **teme** could be used in a more general sense (cf. *Pe* 944, *G* 1541), it occurred especially frequently as a homiletic term (designating the text which provided the theme for a sermon: see e.g. *CT* VI.333–4), and here implies a parallel between the Old Testament prophet and the preacher of the Christian dispensation (which the Judaic religion of the Old Testament was thought to forerun and foreshadow). Cf. nn. to 238–40, 375, 406.

362 **dumpe depe to the abyne**: the verb is well attested, but *DT* 10713 (‘Bot I deghe of thi dynt, and dump into helle’) and 13289 (‘Thai dump in the depe and to dethe passe’) are particularly close.

365–76 Expanded from Jonah 3:5: *So the people of Nineveh believed*

God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

- 365 **This speche sprang:** cf. ‘speeches ... that sprang of her mouthe’ (G 1778).
- 366 **borges and ... bacheleres:** a set collocation (Oakden 1935: 270), which distinguished merchants and artisans (**borges**) from noblemen (**bacheleres**). (*Knights bachelor* were strictly knights following the banner of another knight, as distinct from *bannerets*, who carried their own, but the term was loosely used of knights in general.)
- 368 **all chaunged her chere:** i.e. they showed emotion. Though used with different force in *Sir Gawain* (711; cf. 2169), the expression was normally used to indicate a show of emotion (usually grief or dismay). Cf. ‘[S]o his chere chawngide That the chillande watire on his chekes rynnyde’ (Gawain grieving for the death of a squire at MA 2964–5).
- 370 For **voyde**, with reference to cities, meaning ‘demolish’, cf. C 1013.
- 372 **dared:** MS *doured* is assumed in *MED* to be from an otherwise unattested verb (perhaps associated with Latin *durus*) meaning ‘grieve, suffer’. A form of the verb *duren* (though that elsewhere in the MS is spelled *dur-*) is a possibility, since intransitive usages with the sense ‘suffer, be afflicted’ do occur sv *enduren* 3(d) in *MED*. But it seems easiest to assume an error for **dared** [cowered], which gives good sense and occurs in collocation with **for drede (of)** both at G 315 (‘all dares for drede’) and 2258 and elsewhere (e.g. ‘For drede of dethe thei droupe & dare’: *Laud Troy Book* 7286).
- 375 **Dropped dust on her hede:** the detail (not found in the Bible) aligns the Ninevite actions with recorded Christian penitential practice (cf. nn. to 238–40, 358, 406); cf. the public penance (for having sacrificed to idols) described in Higden, *Polychronicon* 5.107: ‘He ... threwe powder and dust [Latin *cinere*] on his owne heed.’
- 377–84 Expanded from Jonah 3:6: *For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.*
- 385–94 *And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water* (Jonah 3:7).
- 391 Not in the Bible, but cf. Marbod (col. 1678): ‘Et cibus et potus sit ab omni carne remotus. Dum genetrix luget, nullus puer ubera suget’ [and let all fleshly creatures keep away from food or drink,

and while their mothers mourn, let no children suck their breasts].

- 392 **best bite on no brom:** for the collocation with reference to grazing, cf. Chaucer, *House of Fame* 1226 ('herde-gromes That kepen bestis in the bromes') and *Richard the Redeless* 3.19.
- 395–404 **But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way** [convertatur vir a via sua mala], **and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent** [si convertatur et ignoscat Deus], **and turn away from his fierce anger** [et revertatur a furore irae suae], **that we perish not?** (Jonah 3:8–9).
- 395 **forclemmed** occurs only here. It is perhaps to be associated with OE *clemman* [close tight], which the OE noun *clemnes* [torment] suggests could be used in an extended sense. The **for-** prefix is an intensifying one.
- 397 **What** [who]: cf. **Who** [Quis] **can tell if God will turn and repent** (Jonah 3:9). **What** = 'who' is common in predicative use (e.g. 'telle what he is'), though rare as the subject of the sentence (which may be an extension of the predicative use: see Mustanoja 1960: 182); but cf. 'What iherden avere suggen' [who ever heard say] (Layamon 3321), for which the notoriously normalizing Otho MS reads 'Wo ihorde evere segge'.
- 401–3 **stille steppen in the sty** (402) is a more developed version of the metaphor implicit in *via ... mala* [evil way] (Jonah 3:8), by which it was probably suggested; and the correspondence between man's and God's change suggested by the parallel between **if we leven ... And stille steppen in the sty** (401–2) and **He wil wende ... and His wrathe leve** (403) matches that between *convertatur vir a via sua mala* and *convertatur ... Deus, et revertatur a furore* in the Vulgate (see n. to 395–404).
- 405–8 **And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil** [malitiam], **that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not** (Jonah 3:10).
- 406 **Parformed all the penaunce:** cf. *PP* B.5.598 ('I parfourned the penaunce that the preest me enjoyned') and 13.412 ('Ac penaunce that the preest enjoyneth parfourneth yvele'). The language again integrates the events of the pagan and Judaic past into the Christian (and confessional) culture of the poet and his audience. Cf. nn. to 238–40, 358, 375.
- 409–28 **But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious**

God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live (Jonah 4:1–3).

- 409 The new section is announced by a decorated capital, as at 61, 245, 305.
- 410 **wroth as the wynd**: the simile is conventional and especially common in alliterative works (cf. *G* 319).
- 411 **onhit him in his herte, he calles**: the MS reading *onhit his hert ye callez* (with what looks like an *h* written over *y*) leaves a b-verse with no double dip and an odd use of the verb *anhitten*. The emendation restores metre and brings the phrasing into line with the other two recorded uses of the verb (with personal object and adverbial phrase): ‘With swerde ihc thee anhitte’ (*Horn* 716), ‘King arthure agen the brest is felawe ... ahitte [var. *an hytte*]’ (Robert of Gloucester 3825).
- 417–24 In the Vulgate, Jonah’s account of his reasons for disobeying God could well be true, since his thoughts at that point were not reported. But the reader of the poem has already been told that Jonah fled for fear (73–96), and not because of such foresight of the outcome as he here credits himself with. This later sophistical reinterpretation of his own earlier motives is a nice piece of psychology. The Jonah of the poem, moreover, had been happy to request for himself (323–4) the very **mercy** whose extension to others he here (420) resents.
- 417–20 The attributes here rehearsed are, of course, usually matter for praise and celebration, rather than complaint, and, in the Vulgate and in the poem, there are echoes of eulogies of God’s forgiving nature in the Psalms (e.g. *The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy*: Psalm 145:8).
- 423 **a prayer and a pine**: in this context, the nouns (especially the latter) would not normally be treated as count nouns and would have no article (contrast e.g. *Pe* 663). The effect of the indefinite article here is belittling and dismissive (‘a mere prayer and a token bit of penance’). Cf. n. to *Pe* 346.
- 426 **bale-stour**: *deth stoure* and *hard stoure* similarly figure elsewhere with reference to the throes of death: see *MED stour*(*e n*² 2(b)). **bale** is frequently compounded in ME and OE alliterative verse: cf. **bale-hunger** (*C* 1243), *bale-deeth* (*PP* B.18.35), *bale-fyre* (*WA* 562, 2783).
- 429–32 *Then said the Lord, Doest thou well to be angry?* (Jonah 4:4).
- 429 **swey** is the most interesting of the ways in which the poet has chosen to suggest the ‘sound’ of God’s voice in Jonah’s ear. It was

first a whisper (**rouned**: 64), and later ‘a wynd of Godes word’ (345). *Swey* indicates a slightly louder sound of the same quality as a whisper or a wind: the verb is used of the whooshing sound of the sea at 140, and is elsewhere used of a sigh, the noun *swough* similarly indicating a sigh or the rushing sound of water or wind (see *MED* sv *swouen* v and *swough* n¹). The imagined sound is in each case an addition to the Vulgate. Only when He speaks for the last time (489ff) is God’s voice introduced without any indication that the sound in any way differs from that of normal speech.

- 433–42 Expanded from Jonah 4:5: *So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth [umbraculum], and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city.*
- 439 **playn ... fro plyande greves**: cf. ‘downes that ben playn, withoute schadewynge of trees’ (Vegetius 107; cf. *William* 2217). **fro** is an emendation of MS *for*, ‘from’ being the appropriate preposition when *plain* means ‘bare (of), free (from)’: cf. ‘The se is calme and fro rokkis pleyn’ (Lydgate, *Troy Book* 4.2162). The scribe has made the same error at G 1863 and at C 740.
- 441 **bothe**: Latin *umbraculum* (translated in the Wycliffite Bible with characteristic literalness as ‘schadewyng place’) is rendered *booth* both here and in the AV. Though *booth* was most commonly used of a stall, hut or tent, it could also cover a shelter constructed of boughs and leaves, and figures in a military context as a humbler equivalent of a tent or pavilion: cf. ‘that they duelle nought in somertyme in the hete of the day out of tentes and pavylouns or bothes ymade of bowys’ (Vegetius 107). **lefsel** (448) and **loge** (457, 461) figure with similar sense in similar contexts in *DT* 1166, 6025.
- 442 **swowed and slept**: to swoon was not the same as to fall even into a deep sleep (the distinction between the two being apparent in e.g. ‘Half sleping and half suoun’: James I, *Kingis Quair* 510). But semantic shift to less specific sense is a feature of alliterative poetry, and the poeticism is apt in context (Jonah has had a very hot and bothered day). Cf. n. to **navel** (278).
- 443–64 Expanded from Jonah 4:6: *And the Lord God prepared a gourd [hederam], and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd.*
- 444 The climbing plant which the Vulgate designates by the word *hedera* [ivy] – rendered *yvy* and *eder* in the Wycliffite Bible – is referred to in the poem as a (**wod**)**bynde**. That this term was applied to many climbers, including some kinds of ivy, is clear

from the variation between ‘berys of wodbind’ and ‘ivy beryes’ (for French ‘les bayes de edre qe nous appellons yvy’) in Mandeville, *Buke* 83.

445–60 The poet’s elaboration of the charm of the **wodbynde** (446), and of Jonah’s delight in it, prompts some further vivid and expressive *hapax legomena* (cf. nn. to 216, 230, 254, 272, 395): the verb **lyllede** (447), presumably related to Dutch *lillen* [tremble, quiver]; **loltrande** (458), from an unattested verb whose meaning can only be guessed from context; the participial adjective **boghted** (449), which may be related to the noun *boght* (used of a loop in yarn or a curve in the body; cf. also *boughtnes* [bends, folds]), itself related to *bight* (used of a bay; an armpit; or the fork of the legs, as at *G* 1341) and ultimately to OE *byht* [bend, corner, angle]; and the adverb **wythe** (454), which appears to be the only recorded survival of OE *wethe* [sweet, mild], and which the OE verb *wethan* [assuage, make calm] suggests would have in the present context the apt sense of ‘soothing’.

448 **lefsel** elsewhere designates an artfully improvised overarching shelter of boughs. Cf. ‘Umbe the sercle of the cite was sothely a playne, Full of floures ... With lefsales uppon lofte, lustie and faire, Folke to refresshe for faintyng of hete’ (*DT* 335–8). Here, as in *Patience*, the shelter is precisely from heat, and the gloss *umbraculum* provided for the word in *Promptorium Parvulorum* (300) also suggests that it was primarily associated with shade. See also nn. on **bothe** (441) and **loge** (457).

451 **nos** plainly refers to an opening of some kind and is usually assumed to represent ‘nose’ (spelled **nase** at its one other occurrence in the MS: *G* 962). The noun does not elsewhere occur with reference to ‘a projecting doorway’, a sense for which *Patience* provides the only entry in *MED* sv *nose* n¹ 3(b). The only other plausible explanation is that **A nos** represents *an us* (from AN (*un*) *us* [doorway]).

455–6 **no schaft ... The mountaunce of a little mote**: for **mountaunce** followed by a noun that expresses a small portion of another stated noun, cf. ‘Kan nought the montance of a *knotte* unbynde, Aboute his herte, of al Criseydes *net*’ (*Troilus* 3.1732), ‘... this confiture Nat but the montaunce of a corn of whete’ (*CT* VI.863).

457–61 On the expansion of Jonah’s intemperate delight and its relation to the theme of *patience*, which entailed moderation ‘in pain and in joy’ (525), see pp. 204–5 and n. to 525.

457, 461 **loge** (like **lefsel**) was often used of temporary shelters which were made precisely of boughs and leaves. In *Destruction of*

Troy, outside accommodation consists of pavilions for the important and ‘Logges to las [lesser] men with levys of wod’ (6026); and *Master of Game* recommends construction of hunting stations of ‘faire logges of grene bowes’ to protect the king, queen and dogs ‘fro the sonne, and fro evil weder’ (108). As with **lefsel** (448), the use of the term in the context of courtly pursuits and personae suggests a word with more courtly associations than the **bothe** of 441. See nn. to **441** and **448**.

- 460 the devel half:** MS *haf* has previously been read as the verb ‘have’ and the expression interpreted as a form of the imprecation ‘the devel have/take it’ (cf. *G* 1944). But that locution does not occur without expressed object or in such pronounced interruption of syntax as it would here entail. *MED* is probably right to take *haf* as a form of ‘half’ and to compare the expression ‘the devil a bit’ (see *MED* *half* *n* 7a(c)) – though it interprets *half* as ‘behalf’, whereas analogy with such expressions as *devil a bit* would suggest *half* = ‘part’, since the expression obviously means ‘not a bit, not at all’.
- 463 Effraym ... Ermonnes hilles** are the last of the geographical references which the poet has added to the Book of Jonah and which associate Jonah with the northern Jewish kingdom of Israel (see pp. 199–201); both occur elsewhere in the Old Testament (e.g. Psalm 89:12, 2 Kings 14:13). The mountain sides evidently represent ideally cool locations back in the home territory to which Jonah would like to transport the **loge** (461).
- 465–8 But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered** (Jonah 4:7).
- 466 slydes on a sloumbe slepe, sloghe:** the expression *slide (up)on slepe* occurs also at 200 and at *Pe* 59 (*Sir Gawain* reusing the collocation with different signification at 1209), as well as elsewhere (see e.g. *Avowing* 271, *DT* 6). The verb may be varied to *slip* and/or the noun to *slumber(ing)* (see *Pa* 186, *G* 1182). For the collocation of *slow* with *sleep*, cf. ‘[I shall never] slomyre ne slepe with my slawe eghne’ (*MA* 4044). On **sloumbe** see n. to 186.
- 469–88 And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind [vento calido, et urenti] and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted [et aestuabat], and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live** (Jonah 4:8). Note that ‘east (wind)’ and ‘fainted’ in the AV are details that do not occur in the Vulgate text known to the poet.
- 469–70** For the collocation **softe, Zeferus, syfle**, cf. *G* 516–17. The mildness suggested by **softe** seems inappropriate in this context,

but the word was so consistently used to characterize the west wind as to amount to a semi-meteorological term (see e.g. the illustrations sv *Zephirus* (a) in *MED*). For the personifying use of the classical gods of the winds, cf. 132–6 and n.

- 472 **brenne as a candel** seems a weak comparison to use of glaring heat, but it was in fact proverbial (see Whiting C19–21) and is used to characterize incendiary fire at *Arthour and Merlin* 3203–4 (‘wild fer That brent bright so candel cler’).
- 473 For **wyl** used in OE and early ME in combination with following nouns (e.g. *wilday* [happy day], *wilspel* [good news]), see *MED* *wille* n 10(a) and (b). The poet seems to be reviving and extending an earlier practice; cf. n. to **wo-stoundes** (317).
- 478 **swythes**: for *swythe* [burn, scorch] used of the parching and scorching effect of a wind, cf. ‘Unkyndenenes ... is a swithinge [Latin *urens*] wynde that drieth the welle of pyte’ (cited from *Milicia Christi* in *MED* sv *swithen* v (c)).
- 481 **anger ... hot heterly**: Vulgate *aestuabat* [he grew hot] refers to the literal heat Jonah experiences, but the poet correlates that outer heat, which **heterly brenned** (477), with an inner heat of anger (cf. line 3) that causes Jonah to cry out **heterly** and which preserves the moral focus that presents the story as an example of ‘impatience’ (cf. n. to 497).
- 484 **With all meschef ... never thou me spares**: for *spare with* = ‘spare from’, cf. ‘With sporrs scho sparid noght her palfray’ (*Ywain* 2892). Alliteration in the b-verse falls unusually but appropriately on the personal pronoun **me**: Jonah accuses God of targeting him personally, **forbi all other** [above all others] (483).
- 489–94 **And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death** [*Et dixit Dominus ad Jonam: Putasne bene irasceris tu super hedera? Et dixit: Bene irascor ego usque ad mortem*] (Jonah 4:9).
- 489 **laused** [uttered]: cf. 350 and n.
- 493 Jonah’s reference to **righte** [justice] provides a responsive echo to God’s question (‘Is this *ryghtwys* ... ’: 490) that is slightly less immediate and direct than occurs at Jonah 4:9: ‘Putasne bene irasceris [Doest thou well to be angry] ... ?’, ‘Bene irascor ego [I do well to be angry] ... ’
- 495–527 Expanded from Jonah 4:10–11: **Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?**

- 496, 501 **my hand-werk, the werk**: the notion of man as God's 'handwork' was common: cf. 'for mann iss Godess hande-werrc' (*Ormulum* 5054). **werk** was likewise often used of things created by Him (cf. C 198). The concept of God as a creating craftsman is one that recurs in the poem (cf. 123–4, 131, 482) and it here plays a dominant role in the motives for mercy attributed to Him.
- 497 **Thou art waxen so wroth**: this adaptation to the biblical wording ('you grieve for the *hedera*') preserves the moral focus of the poem on that 'impatience' which the biblical story has been pressed into service to illustrate.
- 503 **of materes myn one**: the **materes** of which all earthly things consist are the four elements (water, fire, earth, air), the constituent parts of the 'primal matter', i.e. 'that matiere universal, which hihte Ylem', which God 'hadde under his ordinaunce' prior to the creation (CA 7.210–16) and of which the earth and earthly things were created: cf. 'The mater first therof he mad, That es the elementes to sai That first scapless [shapeless] al samen lay' (*Cursor* 348–50).
- 505 **travayl ... tyne** [waste one's labour]: a common idiom in alliterative verse; cf. 'All my travayle es tynt' (MA 3566; cf. DT 9775 and William 299, 358).
- 506–8 **turned ... mournes**: the words similarly co-occur with reference to conversion to the true faith and repentance for sin in *Cursor* 19013–14: 'Thir wordes herd, thair hert gan turn, And als for thair misdedes morun.'
- 507 Cf. 'Soche a sorowe of that sight sanke to his hert' (DT 5868); the idiom expresses an emotional impression that reaches to the innermost 'quick': cf. C 689.
- 509–10 Babes at the breast would not seem to form a plausible subset of the group **sottes formadde** [crazed fools]. Gollancz's theory that 513–15 were originally intended to follow on 509 would account for this, since it would mean that the **sottes formadde** were initially conceived of as a group distinct from the **little barnes**. In the Bible (see n. to 495–527) God says that the whole of Nineveh does not know the right hand from the left; in the poem, God thinks more specifically of the collateral damage, in the event of destruction, to beings who could not share in the town's culpability because they were not intellectually capable of moral choice: crazed idiots (509 and/or 513–15), infants (510), female simpletons (511–12) and dumb beasts (516–17). Not knowing the right hand from the left (511–12, 514–15) thus becomes the typifying attribute of such incapability, the poet experimenting with different translations of the key idea and carefully enumerating the different groups it would embrace.

513–15 These three lines do not conform to the quatrain units observable elsewhere in the poem, the masculine pronouns of 515 do not correspond with the **wymmen unwytte** of 511, and 514–15 virtually repeat 511–12. Gollancz plausibly suggests that the lines were initially intended to follow on from line 509, and were perhaps later meant to be cancelled; this would account not only for the anomalies in them, but also for the awkward connection between 509 and 510 (see previous n.), which could be the result of the removal of originally intervening matter.

520 **here** (MS *heere*) is interpreted by Anderson as the noun *herre* [lord, master] used as a form of address ('sir'), but this would be inconsistent with the distinction between God as *lord* or *master* and Jonah as *man*, a distinction that is elsewhere carefully and consistently observed in the vocatives used in the poem (see pp. 198–9).

524–7 Since inverted commas do not figure in medieval scripts, the end of God's speech is not orthographically marked in the MS, and some editors close the inverted commas at 523 and treat 524–7 as part of the poet's own closing address. But Burrow and Turville-Petre's claim that **goodman** is a preacher's form of address (and therefore more applicable to the narrator than to God) is true of the word only when it is used in the plural, for it never so figures in the singular: see *MED godman* 1(b). And, though arguments can be raised against the ascription to either voice, those against assigning these four lines to the narrator are more powerful. The poet has too much tact ever to give patronizing moral advice to his readers, always applying his moral wisdom instead to his representative *self*, rather than to the reader (see 8, 35–6, 46–56, 528–9). So when, in the next quatrain (528–31), he draws a conclusion from the advice given in 524–7, he speaks as the recipient of it, not the giver (**Forthy when poverte me enpresses ... saghttel me behoves**: 528–9). He is, of course, also the giver of it, since God is his mouthpiece for the wisdom he wishes to enunciate, and the truth is probably that the lines form a transition from the superior perspective from which God can talk down to Jonah to the different position of the narrator, who always treats himself as a human needing to heed rather than give admonitions to patience. Medieval conventions were friendlier to such layered or transitional voices than the requirements of modern punctuation and traditional literary theory (both of which insist on specific 'characters') permit us to be.

524 **Be noght so gryndel, goodman**: God's words to Jonah are curiously reminiscent of Bertilak's to Gawain: 'Bolde burn, on this

bent be not so gryndel' (G 2338). These are the only two attestations of the adjective **gryndel** in ME, the cognates **gryndellayk** and **gryndelly** being likewise unique to this MS (G 312, 2299). The word means 'fierce' and would seem to be related to Grendel, the ferocious and bloodthirsty monster in *Beowulf*.

- 525 The idea that patience is relevant both **in payne and in joye** is central to the structure of the poem (see pp. 204–5). Cf. 'Patientia est quae in prosperis non elevatur, nec in adversis frangitur' [patience is not being elevated in prosperity nor broken in adversity] (*Fasciculus Morum*, cited in Hanna 1978: 69). The coupling of these intemperate responses (to good or bad fortune) occurs also as lay wisdom in secular contexts: cf. 'Li vileins dit, L'un ne deit dolor sordoleir, Ne sa grant joie surjoir ... Kar li grant dols sovent abesse E la grant joie enpire e cesse' [the countryman says: one should not be overtroubled by trouble, nor be overjoyed in joy, for great grief often lessens, and great joy can decline or cease] (*Protheselaus* 7699–704); 'He is a fool who grieves too much at misfortune [*die te sere ontsiet Een ongheval*] and who becomes over a gain [*ghewin*] too happy [*blide*]' (Walewein 6390–92). MS **preue** would appear to represent the adjective *prou/preu* (as at G 262) – and/or the similar adjective *previ* [proven, trusty] – rather than *privy* (for which *preue* occurs as a spelling at G 902). *Prou* and *previ* were applied mainly to knights who were 'staunch, hardy, abiding'. The strong association between patience and fortitude (see Hanna 1978: 68), for which the term *pruesce* is actually used in *Speculum Vitae* (1539, 5266), explains the collocation of *preu/previ* and *patient*.
- 526–7 The homely logic suggests proverbial wisdom. Bateson quotes an old saying, 'Many rendings make many mendings.' The antonyms certainly have a venerable history, occurring in a gnomic context as early as Ecclesiastes 3:7: *tempus scindendi et tempus consuendi* [(**there is ...**) **a time to rend, and a time to sew**].
- 528–31 The residual personification, the vocabulary, and the reasoning of 528–9 recall the prologue (especially 43–4); the increased **penaunce and payne** that result from a refusal to *suffer* (and so prove the need for patience) recall lines 5–6, and the sense of the poem coming full circle is confirmed in the restatement of the opening line in the closing one. The addition of the adjective **noble** makes for a last line which, as in *Pearl*, contains a small but significant difference from the opening one.
- 529 **softly** in its sense of 'meekly, humbly, patiently' frequently collocates with *suffer*–: cf. 'convenient Is to the wyse, softly, with suffraunce, In al his port to have tolleraunce' (Lydgate, *Troy Book*

2.7012–14).

NOTES TO SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

- 1–7 The poet is here rehearsing what would have been classed as orthodox ‘history’: cf. ‘And aftir that Troye was destroyed, many of the Troianes seylede by dyvers cuntreys of the worlde ... Of hem come most myghty naciouns of the worlde, as moste trew stories of dyvers regiouns and londes tellen’ (Trevisa, *Properties* I, 818). Correlative **sithen** (1, 6: ‘after ... then’) is similarly used to ‘fast forward’ through a long span of time at *Beowulf* 2200–2208 (Burrow 1988).
- 3–4 For the collocation and the sense of **tried**, cf. ‘my wit has bene aye, When treid [Latin *patefacto*] was a trechory, the tulkis to be hedid’ (WA 3566–7), and for *tried* similarly meaning ‘proved, exposed’, cf. ‘The court ys set, thy falshed yt is tryed ... now thou art aspyed’ (*Suffolk’ Poems* 19.523–4). For the pointed play on what would normally be the antonyms of **tresoun/trecherye** and **truest**, cf. ‘The trayn of tho traytours, that truly were fals’ (*DT* 11350), where the reference is to Antenor and Aeneas (who in some later versions of the Troy legend was involved in the betrayal of the town and who is often assumed to be the traitor here referred to).
- 8–12 **Romulus**, the reputed founder of Rome, was of the **kynde** (5) of Aeneas (Virgil, *Aeneid* VI.777–84), as was **Langaberde** (cousin to **Brutus**: 13), who, according to Nennius, *Historia Brittonum*, ch. 17, was the ancestor of the Lombards or *Langobardi*. The founder of Tuscany appears elsewhere as Tuscus or Tirius, one of whom presumably underlies **Ticius**; see further Silverstein 1965.
- 9 Cf. ‘After that Brutus this burgh had buggid on fyrste’ (*StE* 207), where the reference is to the Trojan Brutus (*G* 13) and his foundation of New Troy (later London).
- 13–14 The name *Britain* was regularly derived from an original colonization by **Brutus**, a supposed great-grandson of Aeneas. Accounts of the early history of the realm were therefore often termed *Bruts* or (as at 2523) **Brutus bokes**. See the earliest of these, Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History*, Book I, for details of Brutus’ journey to and settlement in Albion. **Felix** is ‘unique as a praenomen of Brutus ... though the epithet (“happy”) is associated in Roman tradition with founders of cities, etc, and in the Early ME form *sæl*, it is applied to him by the poet Layamon in his chronicle-poem *Brut*’ (A&W).
- 16 **wonder** probably carries the negative connotations it could have,

indicating what is alarmingly, rather than excitingly, out of the ordinary: cf. C 1504 and n. to C 1503–4.

20–26 Though stories set in Arthurian times could be very fanciful, Arthur himself had his origins in chronicle and was accepted as a historical figure – and has here been placed firmly in his historical context: as one of a line of pre-Anglo-Saxon (i.e. Romano-Celtic) kings who ruled over **Bretayn** (14, 20, 25), as distinct from *England* (the name later conferred upon the land by the Anglo-Saxons) or *Albion* (the name for the pre-British island later renamed from Brutus).

23–9 The *Lancelot* refers matter-of-factly to a specific period of *mervoillouses aventures* which ‘lasted, so says the history, 1,690 weeks’ (III, 269). This poet similarly places the **wonderes** of Arthur’s reign in a period of **ferlyes** (to which the court is therefore not unused: see 239).

30–31 Cf. DT 8420–21 (‘Lengys here at a litill, lystyn my wordes, I shall tell you full tyte how hom tyd after’), 12437, 12550. Medieval texts often characterize themselves as oral in delivery and aural in reception, and it was common for them to be read out by one member of a group to the others (see *Troilus* II.81–4); since they were as often read aloud as silently, the distinction between heard voice and read script was more blurred than it is now. So when the poet moves to himself as receiver rather than retailer, a heard source (31) moves imperceptibly into a correlative or underlying written one (33–6).

30 **laye**: here a loose generic marker, confirming the reference to the single **aunter** (27) that is to constitute the matter to come, for the term was not generally applied to the multiple narratives, serial or interlaced, typical of the *roman* [romance].

31 On *in toun* in this context, see Kölbing’s note to *Sir Tristrem* 10.

35–6 The lines are sometimes interpreted as a reference to the alliterative mode and rendered ‘made firm with true alliteration as has long been the custom in the land’ (Burrow). And – though the context concerns an authoritative source, to which the attested sense of **lele** as ‘reliable’ is obviously the most pertinent – the alliteration cannot help but render **With lele lettres loken** metrically mimetic of its content (especially since alliterative verse could be referred to as metrical composition ‘by letter’: CT X.43).

37 **Cristmasse**: in French romance, Pentecost is the festival usually chosen for an Arthurian feast triggering an **aventure** (29), but the Christmas and New Year season – so central to the festive texture and double gift-game plot of this poem – is often preferred in the English tradition. As T&G note, ‘The *Morte*

Arthur also opens with a Christmas feast ... followed by a challenge on New Year's Day.' The poet of *Sir Percyvell* changed the springtime setting of his source (Chrétien, *Conte du Graal*) to Christmas, and the *Gawain* poet may have done the same, for in what appears to be the poet's source for the beheading game, the challenge takes place at Pentecost (First Continuation 3287).

- 44 **fest was ilyche ful fiftene dayes:** **ful** is usually read as an adverb modifying **fiftene dayes**. But metre requires it to fall in the a-verse, as does linguistic usage, since *was ilyche* [was to a constant degree] is always elsewhere in this MS followed by an adjective (cf. C 1386, *Pa* 161). **ful** is here a semi-technical term indicating the plenary court (*cour pleniére* or *esforcie*) as distinct from ordinary court festivities: preceded by a general summons, and involving the formal wearing of his crown by the king, *cour pleniére* normally occurred only at such major festivals as Christmas and Easter (see *Lancelot* III, 134, and our n. to 536–7). The 'fifteen days' are here one of the small details distinguishing Christmas at Camelot from Christmas at Castle Hautdesert: the former feast (where the guests are still assembled for New Year's Day) lasts longer than does the latter, where the guests depart on 28 December (1022–4).
- 54 **first age:** cf. the reference to Alexander (after an account of the feats and tastes of his boyhood) as already 'sa fers in his first elde' (WA 657). The youth of this court recurs to notice in the account of Arthur (86–9) and in the comment of the unexpected visitor (280), who chooses to make it the occasion of some needling dismissiveness.
- 57 **highest ... of wille:** comparable expressions usually refer to courage and a venturesome spirit: cf. 'heigh corage' at *CT* IV.1513.
- 59 **hardy ... on hille:** for the sense of **on hille** [in a castle-fortress (sited on raised ground)] cf. the earl 'That hardy was on hill' (*Ipomadon* 3542) and the reference to Charlemagne's knights as 'doghety proved one hill' (*Rowlande and Ottuell* 12). See also *Paradise Lost* V.732.
- 60 **yep** connoted the vitality of youth (cf. 'Thou art yong and yep': *PP* B.11.18) and here acts to personify the year, matching the calendar with Arthur and his youthful court, who are also young (54) and **yep** (105).
- 61 **double:** certain Church festivals were termed 'double feasts' (*MED feste* 2(d)), and a secular occasion might also be so designated (the marriage of Paris and Helen is celebrated with 'double fest' at *DT* 3462). At double feasts, anthems at Matins and evensong were doubled, and double portions were served at

meals, as at the New Year's feast here (cf. 483) and the Christmas Eve feast later served to Gawain (890).

- 65 **Nowel**: a festive cry uttered over the Christmas season (which included New Year): cf. 'Janus [January] sit by the fyr ... And "Nowel" crieth every lusty man' (CT V.1252–5).
- 66 **hanselle**: New Year (rather than Christmas) was the day for gift giving. The New Year **hanselle** – which meant both 'gift' and 'foretoken' – was intended as an earnest of the prosperous year wished by the donor to the donee: cf. 'Jewels precious can I none find to sell to send you, my sovereign, this New Year's morrow, wherefore, for luck and good Hansel, my heart I send you' ('Iuellis Pricious' 1–4), 'We bylyveth ... thurgh this hansom of this newe yere, spede wel al the yere folwyng' (*Ten Commandments* 28). The gifts are here given to the accompaniment of some game, in which the kisses may be forfeits given by the ladies who laugh (69) when they lose (T&G, citing Emerson 1922). The delightful inconsequence of the sportive rituals here (in which losing seems quite as pleasurable as winning: 69–70) acts as a contrastive prelude to the grimmer and more portentous gift-games that inform the plot of this Christmas poem (and which are both proposed as suited to the New Year season: 283–95, 1105–11).
- 71 **mete tyme**: the feast takes place shortly after Mass (63) – the first event of the day in court life (cf. 1135, 1311) – and is a daytime affair, i.e. a *dinner* (the first meal of the day, traditionally partaken of at noon: cf. PP B.5.493, 20.3–4) rather than a *supper*.
- 74–84 **gay** (74) is almost certainly adverbial, not adjectival (the flat adverb is much commoner in this MS than the form *gaily* and figures frequently in collocation with the semantically similar verbs **gere-** and **grayth-**: see e.g. 179, 666). Guinevere, the decorative centre of the scene, is herself thus finely [**gay**] framed in a richly decorative setting of curtains and canopy with bejewelled drapes. The host and/or hostess's seat at a feast was commonly distinguished by such a canopy or **selure** (76): cf. 'the king to souper is set ... Under a siller of silk' (*Awntyrs* 339–40). **sendal** (76) and **tars** (77) occur elsewhere as rich and costly fabrics, though a cloth named **tolouse** (77) figures only here (see n. to C 1108); with the **Smal sendal** forming Guinevere's side curtains cf. 'The courtins were of cendal thinne' (CA 1.1787).
- 80 **In day** meaning (apparently) 'ever' occurs only here.
- 86–9 The lines have a quasi-physiological basis in what was believed to be the 'lighter' nature of the **brayn** and **blod** in the young (see *Sidrak* B 8553–5 and editor's n. to 8554). **joly** in the sense of 'active, lusty' often collocates with **yonge**, as does **lyght** in its

sense of ‘agile, mobile’: see illustrations in *MED* sv *joli* *adj* 2(a) and *light* *adj* (2). The young and boyish Arthur here described – presiding over a court in its **first age** (54) – is unusual in chivalric romance.

86 **joly, joyfnes, child-gered** alliterate on voiced and voiceless versions of the same consonant. **joyfnes** (< OF *jeunesse, jovence*) is the earlier of only two recorded occurrences of the word and is here semi-technical, recalling the term *iuventus* used in philosophical treatises on the ages of man (on which see Burrow 1986). **child-gered** is found only here, but *childgere(s)* occurs at WA 825, where the twelve-year-old Alexander is pictured ‘chattering to his chieftains in his child gere’, and 1899, where toys are sent him in scorn by Darius, since *childire geris* are what his youth fits him for; and, as was pointed out by Luttrell 1962, in the *Ormulum*, where *childes geres* are referred to as what adults and the old should be free from (8050, 10885). The word in those texts is condescending or disparaging, and the poet is careful to qualify (**sumwhat**) its applicability to Arthur – which lies in his having a child’s fidgetiness (86–8) and in a restlessness natural to youth (89).

88 **longe lye** [get up late]: cf. ‘slepe longe’ at *Troilus* III.1536.

89 For **blod** = ‘spirit’ (*MED* *blod* *n*² 7), cf. 286. For the coupling of **brayn** and **blod** as seats of thought and feeling, cf. *PP* A.10.54–6. For **brayn wylde**, cf. ‘Whan the nek bowyth bakward, yt sygnyfyeth gret hastyness, wyldenes off brayn’ (*Metham, Physiognomy* 36). The eruptions of erratic and wayward ‘wildness’ [impatience of restraint] were associated with the **yonge**: ‘a child That is witles and wylde’ (*Lybeaus Desconus* 184–5), ‘thonne he geong færeth / hafath wilde mod’ (*Second Dialogue of Solomon and Saturn* 199–200).

91–101 This custom is attributed to Arthur in Chrétien’s *Conte du Graal* and its Continuations, where it occurs in the story of Carados (the probable source for this part of *Sir Gawain*): the king refuses to eat at a *haute feste* (**Upon such a dere day**: 92; **farande fest**: 101) until some *estrange novele ou aucune aventure belle* should arrive (*Conte du Graal* 2821–4) or some *Merveille grant ou aventure* should occur (First Continuation 3322–31). Arthur was reported to hold such a *grant feste* on the occasions of the major Christian festivals (see n. to 44). The custom is referred to in other romances: see e.g. Vulgate *Merlin* 320 and Malory 293, ‘the kynge had a custom that ... he wolde not go that day [Pentecost] to mete unto that he had herde other sawe of a grete mervayle’.

99 **the fayrer to have**: cf. ‘For it is graunted of goddis the grekes for

to have The fairer of that fight' (*DT* 4505–6).

104 stightles: sometimes translated as 'rules, presides' (*MED stightelen* (a)), but that leaves **Therefore** (103) inoperative. The poet is explaining, not why Arthur is in command, but why he has not yet gone to table: **stightles ... in stalle** means 'keeps his place, stays fixed' (cf. **standes in stalle** at 107, i.e. 'remains in position, keeps his stand': see *MED stal(le n* 4b and 6b).

107 standes in stalle the stif kyng echoes **stightles stif in stalle** at 104. Such stanza concatenation (which occurs also at e.g. 150–51, 178–9, 278–9) is a feature of the earlier portions of this poem, in which it figures as an occasional formal flourish (as opposed to the regular and integral feature of form it constitutes in *Pearl*).

109–14 Gawan and Agravayn were the eldest sons of an older half-sister of Arthur's by King Lot of Orkeney (see Malory 10).

Bawdewyn, or Baldwin, appears early and regularly in English Arthurian stories as Arthur's court prelate. The high status enjoyed in Arthurian legend (and at the table here) by **Ywan** (Yvain, son of King Urien) was principally due to the fact that Chrétien de Troyes had devoted a whole romance to him (*Chevalier au lion*).

109–10 Both the king's nephews or **sistersunes** (111) are given their sobriquets. Gawain is 'Gawain the good' or 'good Gawain' in the English tradition (see e.g. 2214 and Stokes 2005), while Agravain's cognomen (meaning 'with the hard hand') comes from French romance (see e.g. 'Agravains, / li Orgueilleus as dures mains' in *Conte du Graal* 7887–8).

112 begins the table: for the sense 'sits in the place of honour to the right of the host at the head of the row of guests' (*MED biginnen* 4(c)), cf. 'ofte tyme he [the Knight] hadde the bord bigonne' (*CT* I.52). As a lord spiritual, Baldwin is also given ceremonial precedence over the lords secular at a feast in *Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle*: 'The besschope gan the tabull begynne' (A 359).

114–25 Details of the seating arrangements, the musical accompaniment and the silverware, together with similar alliterating collocations, all feature in the royal feast at C 1398–1416, which likewise includes **side-bordes**, **dese**, the **crakkes** and **baneres** of **trumpes**, **sewes** in **sylveren** vessels, and **nakryne noyse** coupled with **notes of pipes** (cf. 'daunsyng ... with dynnyng of pipis and the nakerer noyse': *SJ* 855–6).

119 Wylde werbles: for **wylde** [unrestrained] applied to sound in the sense of 'loud', cf. 1423 and C 302.

120 mony hert ful high hef: 'heave up the heart' [raise the spirits]

was a common expression (*MED* *heven* v 2(d)), though the intransitive usage with 'heart' as subject is recorded only here.

- 130–31 The superfluosness of comment on the plenty available at a royal feast is a standard topos. The Vulgate *Merlin* (254) is typical: 'no mention is made of the dishes nor of the food with which they were served that day, because it would be arduous to recount and a waste of words' [si ne fait mie a parler des mes ne des viandes dont il estoient le jor servi, car ce seroit anuis de retraire et parole gastee]; cf. *Ferguut* 807–8 and Squire's Tale: 'What nedeth yow rehercen hire array? Ech man woot wel that at a kynges feeste Hath plentee to the meeste and to the leeste' (*CT* V.298–300).
- 134–5 **unethe was ... the first course ... served**: developments in the storyline are not infrequently initiated, in French romance, by a mid-feast arrival of some kind. With the wording here, cf. 'ne n'avoit ancores Claudas que lou premier mes eü' [Claudas had scarcely had the first course] (*Lancelot do Lac* 58).
- 138–44 The details and the wording recall what is represented elsewhere as the ideal male form in courtly and chivalric terms: in *P3A*, Youth 'was balghe in the breste and brode in the scholdirs, His axles and his armes were i-liche longe, And in the medill als a mayden menskfully schapen; Longe legges and large ...' (112–15). Cf. *Sir Ferumbras* 1072–3, *Havelok* 1648–56.
- 144 **Bot** is commonly emended to *Both*, but the mixed construction ('although ... but') is of a kind frequently met with in ME.
- 145 **all his fetures folwande, in forme that he hade**: for the collocation, cf. '[The fate of the body] Most folow by fourme the freeltie of man' (*DT* 8722). **that he hade** is taken as referring to **fetures** by A&W (and by Burrow, who translates 'all the bodily parts that he had harmonizing in shape very elegantly'), which gives perfectly satisfactory sense; but in all their other examples of relative clauses separated from an antecedent noun by an intervening phrase (e.g. 429, 785, 1456) the latter does not occur in the b-verse (where metrical and syntactic units usually correspond) and the former is subject, not object, of the relative clause.
- 147 **Forwonder** is usually printed as *For wonder*, but *for* as conjunction has no logic in context. A noun *forwonder* meaning 'amazement' finds some support from **forwondered** [amazed] at 1660, and from OE *forwundorlic* [very wonderful]. The prefix was more common before verbs, but could occur before nouns.
- 149 **ferde as freke were fade**: for *faren as* = 'resemble, be like', see *MED* *faren* v 14, and cf. 'Thus ware thai fourmed all before, and farand behynde Like as it ware lepards' (*WA* 5563–4). **fade**

(apparently related to *fo* [foe]) is a word found only in northern texts (*Cursor Mundi*, *Sir Percyvell*, *Sir Tristrem*) and on all occasions except one in rhyme position, as here. Meaning sometimes ‘aggressive, hostile’, sometimes ‘fierce, bold, doughty’, it characterizes a man capable of determined and effective physical combat – an impression of himself created by the Green Knight both here and at 201–2.

150 enker grene [bright green?] occurs also at 2477. The adjective **enker** is otherwise unrecorded, but seems related to the ON intensifier *einkar-* [singularly, very] and the adverb *enkerly* [earnestly] found in *MA* (507, 2066, 2639) and occurring in Middle Scots with similar sense (‘deeply, intently’) as a loose intensifier. The revelation of the knight’s colour is reserved for the last line of the bob-and-wheel, and serves to reintroduce the alterity his abnormal size had at first suggested (140), just when that had become somewhat naturalized into large-scale handsomeness (142). **grene** (150, 151) concatenates this stanza with the following one, where the colour becomes a motif worked out through the man’s apparel and his horse’s trappings.

154–6 Some of these terms are from the semi-technical register of furriery. **pane** was often used, as here, of the portion of fur lining visible as an edging or ‘reverse’. **pured** is defined by *MED* (*puren* 3) as ‘trimmed so as to show only one colour to view’; where the **pelure** to which the term was applied is specified, it is invariably *vair/gray*, *blanner* or *miniver*. **blanner** is mentioned elsewhere as a kind of luxury fur, but its precise nature is not known; the identification with ermine (T&G) – on the basis of a hypothetical derivation from *blanc-ner* [white-black] – is doubtful and contradicted by the medial *m* or *d* in other recorded spellings (including MS *blanner* at 856), which support the alternative derivation suggested by OED, from *blanc de mer* [sea-white]; nor does the term **pured** occur elsewhere with reference to ermine, for which uniformity of colour would not be desirable; hence **pured** is avoided in *Sir Gawain* where ermine is at issue (contrast 880–81 with 154 and 1736–7). The lines here may be compared with such expressions elsewhere as: ‘purid pelloure ... to put in oure wedis’ (WA 2893); ‘I-pured [furred] with blawndenere’ (*Lybeaus Desconus* 126); ‘paulle [cloth] purede [furred] with pane [fur lining]’ (*Awntyrs* 353); ‘a mantil ... the pane of rich ermyne’ (*Ywain* 204). Closer parallels occur in other references within the poem to furred garments or materials: see 855–6, 1736–7, 1929–31.

157 wel-haled hose: cf. ‘Hir hosen weren ... Ful streite yteyed’ (CT I.456–7; cf. *Galawnt Pride* 29, *Book of Nurture* 895–9). The word

- hue** is not in the MS, which yields a metrically problematic line; T&G's solution is to omit **grene** and assume caesura before **hose**.
- 159 **upon silk bordes barred ful riche**: cf. 'a ceynt [girdle] of silk, with barres smale', 'a ceynt ... barred al of silk' (CT I.329, 3235). These decorative metal strips were a common ornamentation for fabrics, girdles (cf. 162) and items of harness (cf. 600).
- 160 **scholes**: the footgear of the fashionable (when not armed for battle) often consisted simply of 'soled hose'; see Clark 1955 and Rigby 1956. **rides**: a court at feast is elsewhere entered by a stranger on horseback and the circumstance seems to occasion no surprise in itself (cf. *Conte du Graal* 901ff, CT V.76ff).
- 162 On **barres**, see n. to 159.
- 164 **silk werkes**: *silkwork* generally referred to embroidery. The term **werkes** [workmanship] is used specifically of 'design(s)' at 216, 1817, 2026 and 2432. The gems here (162) presumably pick out the embroidered designs and patterns worked into the fabric (cf. C 1467–8).
- 166 For the popularity of birds and butterflies as decorative devices, cf. C 1410 and 1465–76; for similar embroidered motifs, see 609–14 and n.
- 167 **gay gaudi of grene**: cited in *MED* as the single attestation to a sense of 'ornamentation' for **gaudi**, which otherwise refers to one of the larger beads (sometimes formed of precious metals) in a rosary. 'Beadwork' – i.e. the precious stones picking out the decorative designs (see n. to 164) – is probably the sense here.
- 168–72 Equine accessories could be lavishly ornamented in life and in literature: cf. 'The synne of aornement is in thynges that apertenen to ridynge ... in to curious harneys as in sadeles, in crouperes, peytrels, and bridels covered with precious clothynge and riche barres and plates of gold and of silver' (CT X.432–3); 'Hir steraps were of crystalle clere ... And als clere golde hir brydill it schone' (*Thomas of Erceldoune* 59–63); 'paitrell and crowper garnysshid with fyne golde, enbordred with great pearll' (*Marriage of Margaret of York* 334). On the use of enamel in horse trappings in fact and fiction, cf. *Ipomedon* 7948 and Campbell 1991: 131.
- 169 **molaynes** (cf. OF *moellin* [rotating part] and *molete* [spur]) are found only here and in the *Catholicon Anglicum*, where 'A molane of a brydyll' is glossed *mordaculum* (82). The reference seems to be to the metal parts of a bit.
- 175–8 The ideal male form that combines shapeliness with **sware** and **thikke** power (138) finds its match in a horse that combines **quik** spirit with **gret and thik** sturdiness (for **thik** applied to a horse, cf. the 'thikke palfrey' of Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* 1198):

cf. the horse ‘heigh ... brood and long’, but ‘quyk of ye’, which ‘Nature ne art ne koude nat amende’ in the Squire’s Tale (*CT* V.191–7). Such a horse would indeed be difficult to control, **stif to strayn**, and to render **gayn**, where the sense ‘ready’ seems to imply ‘prompt to respond’, as in some of the usages cited in *MED* sv *gein* adj 2(a).

- 176 **stede**: a term used of a knight’s warhorse. This **stede** and the golden spurs (158–9) – a badge of knighthood (*MED* sv *spore* n² 1(c)) – are thus indications of a knightly status that is otherwise (since the stranger is unarmoured) not immediately apparent (see n. to 276).
- 177 **brayden brydel**: cf. ‘His bridell alle of brente gold with silke brayden raynes’ (*P3A* 131), where **brayden** also means ‘interwoven, braided’ or ‘decorated, ornamentally fashioned’ (*MED* *breiden* v¹ 9(a)–(d) or 9(f)).
- 180–95 The coupling and matching of horse and rider continue into this stanza, of which hair is the theme, the man’s (**of his horse sute**, 180) and the horse’s (**much to hit like**, 187). The two stanzas elaborate a common descriptive topos (the unification of knight and steed in terms of colour and ornamental design): cf. ‘The knight in his colours was armed full clene ... His horse trapped of that ilk’ (*Awntyrs* 378–83), ‘Baith his horse and his geir wes of ane hale hew, With gold and goulis sa gay graithit in grene’ (*Gologras* 605–6).
- 181 **fannande**: glossed ‘waving, floating’ in *MED*, but the present participle here has been improvised, not from the verb, but from the noun *fan* and means ‘forming a fanlike shape’. Cf. the *crul* hair of Absolom which ‘strouted as a fanne large and brode’ (*CT* I.3315). In both cases, the reference is to thick hair broadening outwards and downwards as it falls, rather than hanging ‘smothe’ and ‘thynne’ on the shoulders (*CT* I.676–9).
- 185 **halched**: the verb occurs in ME only in *Sir Gawain*, where it is used of a variety of different forms of enfolding or interlocking (see 218, 657, 939, 1852). The Scots and post-medieval northern usages recorded in *OED* suggest it was a northernism. It is perhaps a variant of *halsen* [embrace], which the poet uses only in the sense ‘greet’ (*C* 1621).
- 186 **knightes capados**: MS *kynge3* must be an error for *knyghtes*, since the poem later associates the garment specifically with knightly dress (571–3). Confusion between *kyng* and *knyght* is a common scribal error (see e.g. *WW* 83, *P3A* 529, *Sir Eglamour* F 1105). **capados** does not occur outside this poem. The quasi-definitions inserted into the text (186, 572) imply not an everyday garment, but one with the special use for knights which

the arming scene later indicates. Since it would need to provide a snug fit under head and neck armour, and since this under-armour garment could be suggested by the combined effect of long hair and full beard (181–5), it obviously covered the head-to-shoulder area (*cap à dos*) and enclosed the neck completely (cf. **that closes his swyre**, 186b; cf. *C* 1569), extending upwards over the head in a coif or close-fitting hood and downwards over the shoulders in a sort of *camail* (a circular neck-and-shoulder covering of cloth or mail: see Evans 1952, plates 22, 33, 35).

- 191 **twynnen** is usually assumed to be past participle of *twine* and glossed ‘plaited’, but participial *twined* is nowhere else given the *-en* suffix proper to a strong verb. It is more probably present plural of *twin*, and **twynnen of a sute** must mean ‘form two of a kind (i.e. match)’; a similar sense of the verb occurs in *Pierce the Ploughman’s Crede*: ‘Of the kynrede of Caym he caste the freres And founded hem on Faryens ... Here I touche this two, twynnen hem I thenke’ (486–96), where, however, the usage is transitive.
- 194 **thrown** plainly has the sense (‘interwound’) which the verb carried when used of the intertwisted strands that constituted ‘thrown silk’ (*MED throuen* v¹ 6(a)). The sense of **thwarle**, which occurs nowhere else, can only be guessed. ‘Reynawde ... thwerled his swerde by grete fyersnesse’ (*Foure Sonnes of Aymon* i.32) likewise provides the only instance of a presumably cognate verb. There appears to be some relation in sense and etymology to *twirl* (< OE *thwer-*).
- 195 Bridle bells were common (cf. *CT* VII.2794–5). The bells in *Sir Gawain* are attached to a thong (194) knotted round the tail and forelock (191). For bells so attached, cf. the ‘large thong full of smale belles’ carried by the couriers of the great Chan in *Mandeville* (Cotton Titus) 160.
- 199 **He loked as layt so lyght**: A&W translate ‘His glance was as swift as lightning’; but **loked** here seems to mean ‘was to the eye, appeared’ (*MED loken* v² 3); cf. the angel at Christ’s tomb, whose ‘lokyng [Latin *aspectus*] was as leyt [lightning], and his clothis as snow’ in the Wycliffite Bible (Matthew 28:3). That the man’s greenness is luminous is suggested also at 236 and 305.
- 203–5 Cf. Ajax, who in his *folye* goes into battle armed only with a sword: ‘Withoute scheld ... no helme, Ne spere ... Ne on his bak non haberioun, Platis, pysane, ne aketoun’ (*Laud Troy Book* 15678–82)
- 206–8 The threatening axe and festive holly spray bring into sharp focus the dual elements in the stranger’s appearance and subsequent behaviour.
- 207 **grettest in grene when greves are bare**: cf. ‘As the holy growth

grene And never chaungyth hew ... As the holy grouth grene ...
When ... grenewode levys be gone' (*Early English Carols* no. 448).

210–15 Formidable axes are elsewhere described in similar terms.

The **bitte ... with a brod egge** [blade with a long cutting edge] recurs in the 'brode bite and scharp' attributed to the **sparthe** (209) in Vegetius (189). The axe at *Lancelot do Lac* 74 shares with the present one the wide sharp blade or axe-head and the sturdy, iron-banded shaft ('la hante forz et roide ... de fer bandee': **stif staf ... wounnden with yrn**), as does the axe of which 'the schafft was bounden' and 'long was the bit' in the *Laud Troy Book* (5801). The **elnyerde** which the present axe-head measures outdoes the 'bite ... to fot long' in *Arthour and Merlin* (4798) and even the 'long and sharpe' blade 'thre fote longe' of the axes wielded by the giants in *Sir Ferumbras* (4433) and *Arthur of Lyttel Brytayne* (403). **grayn** was often used of a 'branch' or 'fork' of some kind, and here evidently refers to some metal projection. Both 'spike' and 'blade' have been suggested, but since the focus is on the massive **hed**, resolved into constituent parts of **grayn**, **bitte** and **egge**, the object at issue may be the socket which held the blade (and spike), and which is visible in the MS illustrations of the axe (folios 94^v and 129^v), which show a long crescent-shaped blade fitted into it.

219–20 For similar **botouns** of silk with pendant attachments, cf. the whip with 'boutons ... De fine soie a pendans d'or' in the First Continuation (11851–2).

223 **overloked** combines literal with figurative sense. Since the stranger is mounted, he physically 'looked over the heads' of the others in the hall, whom he also thus 'did not deign to notice' – for which latter sense of the verb cf. 'thogh he jette forth among the prees And overloke every pore wight' (Hoccleve, *Regement* 428–9) and 'he that overlooketh every man' in Thomas More's account of pride (*The Last Things* 156). The 'body language' of the stranger thus reinforces his words: he will 'go over the heads' of lesser mortals to deal directly only with their **governour** (225).

225–7 The stranger's speech (unceremonious but not abusive) consistently refuses to categorize itself as either polite or rude. While **governour** and **gyng** here lack the complimentary adjectives which complaisant courtesy might dictate, there is nothing rude in his words (**gyng** is neither derogatory nor dismissive: cf. *Pe* 455).

229 **reled hem up and down**: **hem** refers back to the eyes (cf. 304) mentioned in 228 (though the noun **iye** is there singular). The gesture was associated with fierceness and defiance and with aggressive and intimidating postures (see e.g. *Rowlande and*

Ottuell 172, *Gui* 8214, *Moniage* 519); in this poem, it accompanies a sweeping survey of the assembled company following a question (224–5) or proposition (299–300) that requires a response from someone.

- 230 This instance of the Norse-derived verb *stemmen* figures in *MED* sv *stemmen* v² [tarry, stop], but the collocation with **studie** suggests it belongs under *stemmen* v¹ [consider, ponder]: cf. *WA* 2605 ('Ye suld not study ne stem the sternes for to handill') and 3086 ('He studis and he stuynes [is perplexed], he stemes within', translating 'inter se cogitare cepit et dire').
- 233 **had mervayl what hit mene myghte**: cf. *Sege of Melayne*, where, when church bells ring of their own accord, 'Thay hade mervelle whate it myght mene' (532), and *DT* 11638, where a sudden cry from the town leaves no one able to 'meve in hor mynd what it mene shuld'. The court is anticipating later critics in attempting to 'read' the phenomenon and its implications for them.
- 233–41 This wonder-hardened court – who have seen **fele sellyes** (239; cf. 23–9) – are sufficiently stupefied by this one to attribute it to that subsection of marvels that involves the supernatural (**fantoum** or **fayrye**: 240), an assumption which is offered as the explanation (**Therefore**) for what the alliterative collocation in 241 (**arwe** [cowardly, timid] and **athel** [noble]) points up as an uncharacteristic backwardness to respond on the part of the great knights.
- 235 **grow grene as the gresse**: **grow** is glossed 'turn, become' in *MED*. But the verb is probably being used of the man and horse in the same way in which it was used of the grass to which they are compared (as in 'the grass grows green'), and means 'is, carries on life' (*MED* *growen* 7), a usage common in, but not confined to, references to vegetation.
- 236 The glow of **grene aumayl on gold** is one of the most precise of the many references to the products of the goldsmith in these poems. In *basse-taille*, or translucent enamel, the colours were reflected by an underlying ground of gold (Cherry 1992: 31, 44; see also Theophilus 106–7, and Campbell 1991: 117, 127 and figure 62). The contrast between this simile and the one at 235 reflects a pervasive combination of contrasting elements in a figure with a dual identity – as lord of a civilized castle and giant of a grassed-over (2181–90) chapel-cave.
- 242 The comparison is similarly applied to a silent court in *Ipomadon*, when no one responds to Imayne's plea for a champion: 'They satte all stille as anny stone' (6545).
- 243 **In a swoghe sylence**: the participial adjective (*y*)*swowe*,

(a)*swoune* is not elsewhere used attributively to qualify an abstract noun, and *MED* enters *swoghe sylence* as a compound under the noun *swou(e)*. Since the word *swoon* was often associated with sleep and dreaming (*MED swou(e) n (c)*, *swouen v2 (c)*, *swouning (c)*, and cf. *Pa* 442), **swoghe** here (whether adjective or noun) anticipates the simile of the next line, and is probably best translated ‘trance-like’.

244 **slypped on slepe**: a common idiom; see n. to *Pa* 466.

249 **Cast unto that wye**: both *cast* and *warp* were used of utterances in expressions such as ‘cast a cry’ and ‘warp words’ (cf. 224). But this is the single recorded occurrence of *cast* meaning in itself ‘speak’ – though there is evidence that *warp* could be so used (cf. Wyntoun, V, 1707–8 (MS W): ‘When this wif had warpit thus Of this abbot Eugenysus’). Since *warp* and **wye** would provide the alliteration commonly continued through the bob-and-wheel, **Cast** may here be a scribal substitution.

251 **rekenly him reverenced** (cf. *C* 10, 1318), **for rad was he never**: as the alliteration emphasizes, it is primarily the courtesies he is not flustered into forgetting that show how the encounter leads to no loss of nerve on Arthur’s part.

253 **hostel** is a hospitable characterization of the court: though the word could mean simply ‘residence’, it was regularly used of anywhere that provided (paid or unpaid) ‘accommodation’ (cf. 776).

255 It was a rule of hospitality that guests should not be questioned on their identity or business until they had eaten (see 901 and n.). Arthur therefore defers all questions until later (**after**). With his words here, cf. those uttered to a visitor in *Dame Sirith* 28–9: ‘com and site, And wat is thi wille let me wite’.

258 **of thee, lede**: though not abusive, the visitor’s speech lacks ceremony (cf. n. to 225–7); the king is given no respectful title, but addressed simply as ‘man’ – a blokily informal mode of address characteristic of the speaker in his other persona (of castle host) as well (cf. 1071) – and by the informal *thou* rather than the respectful *ye*. Arthur’s *thou* (254, 277) is simply the form that, as king, he uses to everyone (since they are all his social inferiors) except Guinevere.

265–6 A wand or branch signalled peaceful intentions. In the First Continuation, Gawain, going unarmed to question an armed knight, ‘en sa main une vergue prent’ (12807), and the messenger sent by the king in *WW* similarly ‘brake a braunch in his hande’ (121) before riding to address the leaders of two massed armies. It was especially used by messengers and negotiators, and it figures together with green apparel (which could similarly

announce non-belligerence) in the case of the female messenger in the *Stanzaic Morte Arthur*: ‘Hyr paraylle all ... Of one green velvet; In hyr hand a braunche newe, For-why that no man sholde her lette [impede]; Ther-by men messangerys knewe, In ostes whan that men them mette’ (2614–19). The present branch (holly) is suited to the Christmas season and to the green array of its bearer.

- 266 **passee as in pese and no plyt seche**: cf. ‘Ne com ich to thissen londe to halden fiht stronge Ne for nane plihte’ (Layamon 4733–4). For the collocation of **pese** and **plyt**, cf. ‘he aproched all with pes and in na plite ellis’ (WA 4171), where, however, *plite* bears its neutral sense [manner].
- 267 **in fere in fyghtynges** (MS *fe3tyng*) **wyse**: ‘armed following’ is a sense of **fere** [companion, company] attested to in *MED* sv *fere* n² 1. **in fyghtynges wyse** corresponds to AN *en fuer de guerre* [in manner of war] which figures in English legal usage (Legge 1936) and which occurs in Scottish texts as ‘in feir of war’. The stranger is pointing out that he would have donned armour (268–70) had he come as a serious political opponent ‘with an army (**in fere**) in guise of war (**in fyghtynges wyse**)’. When it is a noun rather than an adjective that occupies the frame *in ... wise*, that noun is, in this MS, regularly in the genitive (see e.g. C 271 and 1187). Since MS *fe3tyng* must be a verbal noun and not a present participle (which always terminates in *-and(e)* in this MS), emendation to genitive **fyghtynges** not only provides the long dip lacking in the b-verse as it stands, but also brings the grammar of the idiom into line with its other occurrences.
- 274 **By right**: in full court, or *cour pleniére* (see n. to 44), Arthur would traditionally grant any boon requested by any arrivant, so long as it was consistent with his honour to grant it; see e.g. Malory 294.
- 276 **Sir cortays knight**: as the visitor is unarmoured and therefore not immediately identifiable as a knight, he has so far been referred to simply by the alliterative synonyms for *man*: **gome** (151), **schalk** (160), **freke** (196), **hathel** (221), **lede** (232) and (in Arthur’s first words to him) **Wye** (252). Since his words at 268–70 make it clear that he possesses knightly arms, the unknown quantity he represents has now become the known quantity at least of a knight, and Arthur therefore now gives him a more specific honorific than he had at first been able to use.
- 278–9 ‘... to fyght.’ ‘Nay, frayste I no fyght’: stanza concatenation is used to good effect, marking the wrong-footing of Arthur’s attempts at normalizing courtesy, to which the stranger again (cf. 256) responds with a **Nay**.

- 283–8 **Cristemas game ... Yol and New Yere ... gif him of my gift:** the stranger's proposal is presented in terms of the games and New Year gifts (cf. 65–70) appropriate to the two successive Yule and New Year festivities in which the action of the poem takes place.
- 286 **brayn** is an adjective of obscure origin which otherwise occurs only in slightly later Scots usage, though with a sense obviously similar to the one implied here: cf. 'He walxis [grows] brayne in furour bellicall' (Douglas, *Aeneid* XI.xvii.73).
- 290 **bide the ... bur:** cf. 374 and *Pa* 7.
- 294 **stande him a stroke:** cf. 'His strok may no man stand' (*Sir Tristrem* 2335).
- 296 **Barlay** has attracted much conjecture but no convincing explanation. It is 'usually identified with the dialect word *barley* used in children's games to call a truce or to lay first claim to something ... A suggested etymology is OF *par loi, par lei*, "by law" ... Another explanation is that the word is a noun meaning "blow" ' (A&W).
- 297 **respite** is a semi-technical term frequent in chivalric romance, where it indicates the stipulated interval between a legal or formal decision and the date on which it is to take effect; it is especially used of the deferment for a specified period of agreed combats (cf. *Yvain* 3685, 4805); for the interval of one year, cf. *Conte du Graal* 5993–4 ('La bataille est ... jusqu'a un an respittee').
- 298 **A twelmonyth and a day** indicates the 366 days involved in 'a year to the day'; it is legally exact in register; cf. the written stipulation in the First Continuation that a corpse must remain in Arthur's court 'un an et un jor, plus ne mains' (14378).
- 299–300 **let see tite Dar any hereinne oght say:** the expression occurs in the context of challenges: 'What man he is, lat se, That take this bataile swithe' (*Sir Tristrem* 1423–4), 'And now lat se ... whether ye dare com oute of youre castell, ye thirty knyghtes' (Malory 511). The stranger implies (to somewhat comic effect) that the combat proposed is a perfectly regular one that requires no pause for thought – although, of course, the daring needed for this bizarre exchange of blows is rather different from the usual type with which the wording here, and the expression **dar stiflyche strike a stroke for another** (287), misleadingly aligns it. The briskly challenging **let see** seems to have left its mark on the moment, for it is one of the few phrases to survive in the later ballad version: 'Let me see who will answer this' (*Greene Knight* 143).
- 304 **runisch his red iyen:** *runish* and *renish* are confined to

alliterative verse, where they show some conflation of sense and form as between OE *run* [runic letter; mystery] and the Scandinavian equivalent of OE *hreo* [rough, angry]. Thus *renish* in WA seems to mean ‘forbidding, intimidating’, by reason either of hostility or of a portentousness associated with the inexplicable or unexpected (387, 840, 3069, 5058). Similarly, C 1545 and 1724 (where the MS forms are respectively *runisch* and *renyschly*) show a meaning (‘eerie, spooky’) related to *run*, while Pa 191 (MS *runyschly*) clearly carries a meaning (‘roughly’) related to *hreo*. In the other instances of *runish/renish* (G 304, 432, 457; C 96), it is less clear in which of the two directions the sense tends. Since red eyes are elsewhere associated with anger and fierceness, and since the action described occurs among other gestures of a macho kind (305–8), the word here seems to mean ‘in a manner intended to be stern and forbidding’, as at WA 3069 (‘Than has Sire Dary dedeyne & derfely he lokes, Ryses him up renysch & reght in his sete’). On **reled**, see n. to 229.

305 ‘Bending the brows’ is explained as arching or raising them in *MED benden* v¹ 2b, and **Bende** is sometimes glossed ‘arched’. But the meaning ‘frown’ is certainly attested (cf. ‘Depart freely ... And not with frownyng visage and browes bent’: Idley II.ii.2343) and fits the present context of stagily aggressive posturing. On **bresed**, see n. to C 1694.

307 **kepe him with carp**: the verb here has a sense (‘respond to’) analogous with the one it bears when one warrior *kepes* [meets] an assault from another (*MED kepen* 8): the challenge here was verbal and has not been verbally (**with carp**) ‘met’. **coghed ful highe**: the verb *cough* was used to refer to a range of vocal gestures, including a sound made to attract attention to a following utterance (Burrow 2002: 129, 140). Such a sound uttered **ful highe** would here suggest a scornful exclamation that heralds the tone and content of the following speech.

308 **rimed him ... ryght him to speke**: **rimed** derives from an OE verb meaning ‘to make roomy’. ‘Drew himself up’ is the gloss generally proposed for **rimed him** both here and in the only other comparable use of the verb at WA 5058 (where it refers to a corpse coming to life): ‘The renk ... raxsils [stretches] his armes, Rymed him full renyschly.’ In both cases, however, the reference may be to an expansion of the chest caused by drawing a deep breath. ‘Drew himself up’ seems in *Sir Gawain* covered by the b-verse: for (though editors often gloss **ryght him** as ‘prepared himself’ or ‘proceeded’) the only recorded reflexive uses of *righten* concern standing up or making oneself erect; cf. WA 840, where the expression is, as here, used of a seated and mounted figure

straightening himself up in his stirrups.

312 On **gryndel**- forms in this MS, see n. to [Pa 524](#).

313 **revel**: here used in a sense (related to 'rebel') which the word could have in French (though not elsewhere in English): i.e. to denote aggressive energy or defiantly confident pride. Cf. *Ipomedon* 4820 (with reference to an assault), 'Par grant orguil [pride] e par revel', and *Protheselaus* 12178 (with reference to a march), 'Par orgoil e par grant revel'.

314 **Overwalt** occurs only here in other than a literal and physical sense, thus lending the force of a metaphor not stale or dead to the derisive accusation that no actual bodily **dint** [blow: 315] is required to bring these knights to the floor.

315 **dares for drede**: *dare* [lie still or hidden] meant 'cower' when used, as here, in implied contrast to active combat; for the phrase as levelled in scorn against adversaries, cf. Minot 2/39: 'The Scottes ... Now er thai dareand all for drede, That war bifore so stout and gay.'

316 *greve* and *agreve* occur elsewhere of response to words that cause anger or pain. Active voice **greved** (as here) is preferred for the former emotion, and is associated with combative refutation in word or deed: cf. *P3A* 182 and *MA* 1352–4 ('Thane grevyde sir Gawayne at his grett wordes ... With hys stelyne brande he strykes of hys hevede'). Passive *be (a)greved* generally occurs, however, when insult or criticism has to be endured unrepudiated: cf. *Generydes* 4089 and *Rowlande and Ottuell* 289–91. It is a *greved* blush of this latter kind that the Green Knight's criticism at the end of the *aventure* draws from Gawain, 'So agreved for greme he gryed withinne. All the blod of his brest blende in his face, That all he schrank for schame ...' (2370–72) – where the passive participle **agreved** and **withinne** indicate the contrast between Gawain's self-directed revulsion and Arthur's defiant aggression at 316. The two moments mark the sad passage traced in the poem from confident indignation at honour impugned to painful acknowledgement of honour forfeited.

317 ME **schame** covered mortification at publicly imputed shame (as here) and what we would now call self-consciousness or embarrassment (as at 1189) as well as consciousness of guilt (as at 2504).

322–3 Enjambement between stanzas is rare in this poem, and should not be assumed here: omission of a pronoun subject was not uncommon, and many stanzas in Chaucer's *Troilus* begin *And + past tense*, 'And seyde' providing the commonest instance (e.g. II.1310, III.1100, IV.525, V.476).

324 Cf. 'Ye be-gan the folye ... And seth ye folye have sought, folie

have ye founden' (*Merlin* II, 572), cited by Whiting F389.

- 326 **upon Godes halve** is always a serious oath in this corpus (cf. 692, 2119, 2149 and C 896) and thus suggests a weightier anger on Arthur's part than it would in texts readier to invoke God merely for emphasis.
- 327 **baythen thy bone that thou boden habbes**: the established alliterative collocations (cf. *Harley Lyrics* 3/35, *StE* 194) underline Arthur's sarcastic endorsement of the moral convention that the stranger has relied on (that any petition asked of the king holding *cour pleniere* will be granted: see 273–4 and n. to 274).
- 331 Arthur is gauging the weight of the axe, an act referred for explanation to the fact that he intends to deliver a blow with it. For the causal implications of the relative **that** here, cf. 'No mervayl thagh him mislike That hoped of no rescowe' (2307–8); a present participle construction is the ModE equivalent ('And, intending to strike with it, moves it around').
- 335 The sense of **drye** here and at 724 is similar to the meaning 'undeflected' which the word can have as adverb (cf. 1026 and *Pe* 125). It refers to the stoic perseverance of Gawain at 724, while it here conveys the unperturbed air adopted by the stranger – there being a touch of comedy in his ostentatiously insouciant gestures in the face of imminent execution.
- 339 **Gawan** enters the narrative in as unheralded (though not as melodramatic) a manner as the Green Knight: it is important to remember that there is no MS authority for the editorial title *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, which rather unfortunately pre-announces the protagonists. There is no indication that Gawain is to be the hero of the story in the only other previous mention of him (109).
- 341 **I beseche** was an expression used when addressing a petition to an acknowledged social superior, usually a lord, heavenly or earthly. The verb serves to categorize Gawain's speech as a chivalric petition of the formal and public kind that Arthur, in responding to a knight thus requesting an *aventure*, would feel obliged to grant (cf. *Yvain* 2336–40).
- 343 **Wawan**: the MS reads *Gawan*, but the *W-* form is used elsewhere when alliteration requires it (e.g. 559, 1010). See n. to 559.
- 346 **my lege lady**: Gawain's position next to Guinevere enables him to include Arthur's consort in his deference to his sovereign: her gracious consent to Gawain's leaving her side (which, as Burrow points out, would leave her seated between two empty chairs, Arthur not having taken his seat on her other side) is also a necessary precondition of any interception by Gawain, an interception which the syntax (the prolonged conditional clause

with which the stanza begins) carefully represents as provisional on acts of command and permission from Gawain's lord and lady.

- 347 **counsel** was a key principle of etiquette in medieval court politics. Giving it was, for the major vassals, both a right and a duty (cf. 'Len devroit par droit son seignor Consellier': Bérout 3112–13) and proper procedure required it to be followed by the lord, who would defend himself against recriminations by so doing, 'C'um ne li puisse a mal retraire' [so that no fault can be found with him] (Marie de France, *Lanval* 384; cf. *DT* 838–9, 8910–14). Once the transfer of the game has become expressed corporate counsel (362–5), Arthur therefore submits to that decision without question or objection. It would thus be anachronistic to hear anything patronizing or critical in Gawain's proffer of **counsel** to Arthur: the word in fact reinforces his marked observance in this speech of the vassal-overlord relationship between himself and Arthur.
- 352 **hawerer of wille**: the ON-derived adjective *hauer* had the sense 'skilful' in early ME, but is not much recorded thereafter and seems to be used in this corpus in a weakened sense of 'good, fine' (cf. 1738, *C* 18). **wille**, as at 57, refers to spirit and courage (cf. *CT* IV.1513, *DT* 3924).
- 353 **bent** – from the poetic vocabulary of alliterative verse, to which (in the sense 'battlefield') it was confined – lends a heroic note.
- 354–5 For the modesty, cf. 'for thogh y ben in batail schent, it ys no lest [loss] for hem' (*Sir Ferumbras* 459).
- 359 For the principle that the knight who is the first to request an adventure should be granted it, cf. *Yvain* 682–8 and *Fergus* 5199–201.
- 360–61 We construe **riche** as a verb, 'to dispose, to arrange matters', though *riche/ruche* (which figures chiefly in alliterative verse) is elsewhere transitive (e.g. *Pa* 101) or reflexive (e.g. *G* 367). Alternatively, one might assume (with T&G) adjectival **riche** and a not uncommon ellipsis of the verb 'to be' ('And if I have spoken inappropriately, let this noble court nevertheless be blameless').
- 367 **fayre** in these contexts can mean 'in an ideally normal way', 'without immoderate force or haste' (cf. *MED fair(e adv)* 6) and probably here indicates 'calmly, at an ordinary pace' (cf. 'he stey [rose] up into the eyr, not rygth hastyli & qwykly, but fayr & esly': Margery Kempe 8).
- 368–71 The ritual gestures of kneeling and blessing formalize the transfer of the axe, and with it the **game** (365), to Gawain. With the blessing, cf. the ones bestowed before a battle at *Rowlande and Ottuell* 377 (on Roland by Charlemagne: 'he gaffe hym goddes blyssynge') and at *Sir Ferumbras* 340. The gesture accompanying

the blessing (**lyfte up his hande**) is presumably the sign of the cross (used to ward off danger: see 1202–3): cf. *Sir Ferumbas* 256, ‘He lifte up ys hond & blessed him than’ (i.e. crossed himself: see *MED* *blessen* 5), and *Seinte Marherete* 22, ‘Heo hef up hire hond & blecede al hire bodi with the taken of the holi rode.’

372 Cf. ‘And sett the buffett well’ (*Greene Knight* 174). For **sette** applied to blows in the sense of ‘deliver’, see *MED* *setten* 5a; the same verb is used (1937) of the kisses which are the equivalent of the blows in the other ‘exchange’ game Gawain pledges himself to – where exactness of number and proper delivery are also at issue. **Kepe thee** is usually glossed ‘take care’, but *kepe* in that sense is not normally reflexive, and *MED* correctly assigns the present instance to reflexive *keep* = ‘govern one’s behaviour’ sv *kepen* 14c(b). **Kepe thee ... that** thus means ‘guide your actions in such a way that’ (i.e. ‘be sure to’). **cosyn** [kinsman] was especially frequently used of a nephew or *sisterson* (111): cf. ‘Thi sistersonne am I, thou eam [uncle] & I cosyn’ (Mannyng, *Chronicle* II.4703), ‘Cosyn to the kyng & he his kyde em’ (*DT* 1284).

373–4 Though Arthur is no longer to deliver the physical blow, he can keep up his verbal sarcasms, common collocations (as at 327) again giving alliterative edge to the irony. **redes him right**: to ‘rede someone right’ was to arrange matters in such a way that someone gets what he wants (cf. *Harley Lyrics* 5/24), as at C 1346. Arthur is thus sardonically suggesting that the stranger ‘gets what he asked for’ in every sense.

378 **Refourme** is here used in a sense (‘re-formulate, rehearse’) different from the one (‘restore, repair’) in which it is elsewhere recorded. The contractual terminology of **forwarde(s)** and **covenaunte(s)** (the singular and plural are used interchangeably) figures insistently throughout the two ‘games’ constructed as a framework for the relations between these two men (see 409, 1105, 1395, 1405, 1636, 1934, 2347; 393, 1123, 1384, 1408, 1642, 2242, 2328, 2340). The agreed terms and conditions underlying the poem’s two contractual games create an arena in which *truth* [good faith], the virtue represented by the pentangle (623–39), is at issue in its precisest sense of truth to one’s pledged word.

380 **truly**: not here in weaker sense ‘indeed’, but ‘on one’s word of honour’, i.e. in a moral sense which introduces the poem’s larger theme (*truth*) and which is here emphasized by the alliteration of **truly** and **tryst** (both ultimately derived from *trow*) and by Gawain’s response, **In good fayth** (381).

382 **whatso befallles after**: the expression generally occurs (as here)

following commitment to a course of action (cf. *William* 148, 607) and means ‘whatever may come of it’. It here conveys to the stranger Gawain’s awareness that he may well be walking into a trap, but accepts whatever consequences may follow.

387–91 The stranger has plainly heard of Gawain, and his satisfaction at finding his opposite number is to be this the most renowned and esteemed of Arthur’s knights is emphasized by the stanza concatenation, in which the name, **Gawan**, is repeated, with honorific (**Sir**). Bertilak’s household have also heard of Gawain (908–27), as has his wife (1226–9). On Gawain’s fame, see [p. 252](#).

390 **Gog**: a colloquial form (of *God*) also attested in *Towneley Plays* (2.44, 174).

394–404 To the agreed **covenant** (393) the stranger now adds a clause (that Gawain must seek out his opponent for the return blow), to which he again specifically requires and receives a formal plighting of **trauthe** (394, 403). Gawain’s awareness of the seriousness of a commitment so pledged is apparent in his cautious response: he has, he points out, neither name nor address by which to seek the man (398–400), and is prepared to pledge his truth only to do his best to arrive at the unknown place, not to succeed in doing so (401–3). His caution testifies to his **trauthe** (he will not make a promise he might not be able to keep), but also to his courage – since it shows him clearly recognizing the possibility of a return blow. In this respect, the story does not belong with those (such as Chaucer’s *Franklin’s Tale*) featuring a so-called ‘rash promise’; for it is wrong to claim that Gawain would not have agreed to the contract had he ‘known that the conditions would in fact prove possible’ (Green 1999: 321); here and at 382 he fully confronts the superficially impossible outcome of the **covenant**, from which he would not in any case have rescued Arthur had he not realized that ordinary impossibilities could not be relied on in a figure whose very material form so visibly flouted them.

396 **wages**: the financial metaphor recurs with the word **pay** (2247, 2341) and figures also in the other ‘game-exchange’, in which mercantile terminology is consistently used (see e.g. 1939–41 and Mann 1986). The metaphors underpin with monetary logic the moral ‘dues’ incurred by a **bargayn** (1112).

397 **before this douth**: **douth**, though often used in a generalized sense of ‘group’ or ‘company’ (cf. *C* 1196), here bears its historically more specific sense and refers (like OE *duguth*) to the armed and aristocratic troop serving a lord and sharing his hearth – i.e. Arthur’s knights, who figure here as the witnesses **before**

whom things have been publicly said or done (cf. 450 and n.).

398 **thee ... thy**: the protagonists consistently use the less formal *thou* forms when addressing each other as partners in the **game**. When their relationship is that of host and guest, they both (Gawain consistently, Bertilak normally) use the respectful *ye* forms (see e.g. 1035–78).

406–9 The syntax has been variously construed, but the contrast between the object-verb order (characteristic of subordinate clauses) in 406–8 (**thee telle, tappe have, me ... has smyten, thee teche**) and the verb-object order at 409 (**frayste my fare**) seems designed to mark the transition from subordinate clauses introduced by **If** (406) to a main clause introduced by **Then** (409): 407 rewords in reverse order the subclauses of the previous line, **when** governing both 406b (**when I the tappe have**) and 407a (**And thou me smothely has smyten**) and the conditional clause of 407b (**smartly I thee teche** [if I promptly inform you]) paralleling the **If** clause of 406a (**If I thee telle truly**).

406–14 For **tole** (413) used of this and other weapons or blades, cf. 2260, C 1108; *knock* (414; cf. 2379) was also regularly used of strokes and blows. **tappe** (406), however, was used, as today, of unforceful blows and it is in this poem used of the axe-blows only by the Green Knight (cf. 2357), who is here characteristically dismissive of the coming blow (which cannot in fact harm him).

407 **smartly**: previous editors gloss ‘promptly’, a standard sense of the word; but with regard to giving information, the adverb has the sense ‘clearly and concisely’ (cf. *MED* sv *smertli* (c)), which here provides a closer semantic link with **truly** (406).

409 **frayste my fare**: A&W think the idiom literally means ‘ask how I am getting on’, but that gloss is more suited to the different idiom *frayn ... fare* at 2494. In all other recorded instances of *frayst ... fare*, the verb carries its primary sense ‘to seek out’ and concerns first-hand experience (of someone or something) gained by a journey: in WA, Alexander, hearing that his mother is gravely ill, declares that he must return home and suspend other matters until ‘I fraist have the fare of my fayre lady’ (2145); in *John Evangelist Hymn*, the saint’s devotees are said, in an apostrophe to him, to have been *fayne* ‘for to frayste of thi fare ... and come rynnande to the’ (147–50); and *Quatrefoil of Love* (381–3) concerns a metaphorical journey on the part of those who have vainly sought worldly help in affliction and ‘have been down that road’ (‘We seke efter socoure on everilka side ... When we hafe frayst of that fare felde is owre pride’). Our gloss ‘seek out my whereabouts’ is consistent with the other instances of the idiom

and also with the stranger's own emphasis (cf. **thou schal sech me thyself**, 395) and the contrast with **thou may leng in thy londe** (411).

- 412–16 slokes** is apparently an imperative, and is usually referred to the Norse-derived *sloken* [quench, extinguish] and glossed 'Enough!' But no other similar usage is recorded for that verb or for the related *slokken*, *slekken*, etc. The word seems to have been selected to provide a rhyme with **cnokes** (the spelling with single *k* indicating that the vowel, normally short, is here long) and **strokes** – which represents an unusual application of a verb that (in this sense) always elsewhere takes a part of the body as its object. The meditative gesture (Gawain is presumably palpating the axe for weight and sharpness) contrasts with Arthur's more forceful preparatory motions (331), as do the calmly polite words that accompany it.
- 418 lut with the hed** (cf. 'loutynge down with hir hed': *St Elizabeth* 114) is paralleled in the return blow by 'lened with the nek and lutte' (2255).
- 421 gederes hit on hyghte**: one of a number of lexical details that serve to unite this blow with the later return blow (cf. 2260); for further examples, see nn. to **418**, **423**, **425**.
- 422 kay** (of Norse origin) was often applied to the hand (cf. dialect 'cag-handed') and apparently also to feet (cf. the surname *Cayfote* recorded in *MED* sv *cai*). In a precisely visualized action, Gawain's left foot is placed forward to balance the axe raised above his shoulder.
- 423 lyghtly** combines the meanings 'easily', 'quickly', 'requiring little force' and 'by natural inclination'. The recurrence of the adverb in the later return blow shows a nice distinction: though Gawain can let the axe *fall lyghtly*, this particularly large and heavy weapon (208, 289) can be *lifted lyghtly* (2309) only by a man of the Green Knight's outsize proportions.
- 424** Cf. 'Mony swouwninge lay thorw schindringe of scharpe' (*Joseph of Arimathie* 513).
- 425 gres** (used at a similar point in the return blow: 2313) usually refers to the fatty tissue of animals (as at 1326 and 1378). The beheading prompts a style of anatomical objectivity reminiscent of the hunting scenes, with which it shares other words also, such as *biten* (426, 1162, 1457) and *schynderen* (424, 1458, 1594).
- 428 foyned with her fete**: Vantuono and Bennett each cite a different example of a sort of football being played in evil glee with a decapitated head (cf. Magoun 1937), Bennett opining that the 'courtiers' thus vent the 'tension' of their 'suppressed fear'. The *foining* is, however, more likely to represent, not malicious

kicks, but that involuntary warding off that is an instinctive response to contact with the gruesome – especially on the part of those not hardened to it: for the ‘foiners’ here are not the knights, who are all seated at the table, but the by-standing attendants. *Foin* was normally used of sword strokes, in which context it stood in contrast with ‘cutting’ and ‘carving’, being a thrusting or shoving action designed as much as a defensive manoeuvre (to push back or off the strokes of the enemy) as an attacking one (cf. CT I.2550); one might contrast **frunt with his fot** at *Pa* 187, where an aggressive kick really is meant.

- 435 **Steppes into stele-bawe**: in this common alliterative formula (cf. Layamon 11926, *MA* 916, *WA* 901), also used at 2060, **stele-bawe** and *stirop* are interchangeable; though the former may sound more ‘poetic’, it is not confined to verse and appears in the very unpoetic *Paston Letters* (I.543).
- 438 **he were** (subjunctive after **thagh**) is the emendation usually adopted for MS *ho we*, though Vantuono reads the MS as *no we* and accordingly prints *nowe* (which, however, yields an unmetrical b-verse).
- 440 **bluk**, emended to *bulk* by T&G, has been variously explained, but is probably correctly assumed to be a variant of *blok(ke* in *MED*, which, however, provides no parallel for either the spelling or the application to a human body. But *o/u* variation is common in this dialect, and the required extension from tree-trunk to human trunk certainly occurred with Latin *truncus* (given as a gloss for *blok* in the *Promptorium* 40: ‘Bloke or stok: *Truncus*’) and with ME *stok* (*MED* *stok* n¹ 1c); cf. post-medieval *block* = ‘trunk of body’, in a reference in the Coverdale Bible (1535) to the limbless body of Dagon: ‘The bloc [Vulgate *truncus*, AV *stump*] laie there only’ (1 Samuel 5:4/5).
- 445–7 There are small alterations to what would be normal usage were the man and his face still a unity: **the face** has replaced ‘his face’, and distinct pronouns (**he** and **hit**) are required for the lifting of the head and the opening of the eyes. Burrow (followed by A&W) renders **his mouth** as ‘its mouth’, pointing out that *his* in ME could be used as the neuter as well as the masculine possessive pronoun; but the poet’s normal form for ‘its’ is **hit** (see *Pe* 108, 120, 224; *C* 956; *Pa* 267). **his**, in **his mouth** at 447, after the previous lines, must thus bear the sense it would have if applied to one’s watch rather than one’s hand (‘the mouth that belonged to him’).
- 445 **Toward the derrest on the dese**: the words that follow are actually addressed to Gawain (who is not seated at the dais), but the court is being invoked as witness (cf. 450), **the derrest on**

the dese being a formulation that places emphasis on the focal point of the public hall rather than on any one individual at the dais; although this line has been linked with 2460, and thus with Guinevere, she is quite irrelevant to the emphasis of these words.

450 **herande these knightes**: modelled on French usage, in which *voiant* and *oiant* were used to introduce a phrase citing the presence of witnesses – in Arthurian romance often, as here, the court: cf. ‘Oiant toz les bons chevaliers’ (First Continuation 8925; cf. 1707, 1768 and *passim*), ‘Arthur asked on hight, herand hem alle’ (*Awntyrs* 404).

452–3 **disserved thou habbes** is sometimes treated as a parenthesis, on the assumption that it cannot grammatically belong with the next line; but *deserve* + *passive infinitive* is regular (cf. *CT* I.1741) and such verbs as *yield* could in the passive take as their subject what would in the active voice be their indirect object: cf. ‘This prisonere ... shal be yolde al this peyne’ (Wyclif, *Sermons* 2.175).

456 **recreaunt** signalled the disgrace of knighthood. Its derivational sense of ‘going back on a promise, forsworn’, is obviously relevant here (448, 450). It was especially used of one who forfeited his cause by surrendering himself in combat (cf. ‘yilt hym recreaunt’: *PP* B.18.100); and the word could thus mean ‘cowardly’ (‘vos me tenez Por recreant et por coart’: *Conte du Graal* 7370–71) and could characterize a knight who avoided or fled from combat (*Erec* 2462, *Yvain* 2563). The taint of *recreantise* attached, by extension, to any knight who allowed himself to be diverted from any course he had undertaken (even from the physical road in which he was travelling: *Conte du Graal* 6381–3), especially from an *aventure* involving combat (*Erec* 5605–8; cf. *Conte du Graal* 6557). A deflection from the path he has committed himself to, a cowardly flight from combat, underpinned by the central disgrace of betraying his sworn word, are all implied in the appellation with which Gawain is here threatened should he fail to make the journey.

457 The noun **rout** elsewhere means ‘blow’, but the sense required here (‘pull’) is clearly attested for the verb from which it is derived (*MED* sv *routen*⁴ 2(a)). On **runische** see n. to 304.

460–61 The lines exemplify a formula often used for the disappearance from actual and cognitive view of a figure, mysterious and non-mortal (‘Ther wist no man wher he becom’: *Sir Amadace* 739) or otherwise (‘no man wyste never ... Where he become, ne in what kithe’: *Richard Coer de Lyon* 1320). It is here extended to apply also to arrival, thus creating borders of ignorance around the episode that correspond with the verbal and visual frame of the doorway provided by the parallel

between the sudden entrance (**hales in at the halle dor**: 136) and exit (**Haled out at the halle dor**: 458).

- 464 **laghe and grenne**: for the doublet, cf. ‘nouthur lagh ne gren’ (Audelay 45/967). Neither Arthur nor Gawain has failed to take in the seriousness of what has occurred, but good cheer must be restored as soon as possible, since there is a feast toward, and so the two kinsmen at once cooperate in laughing off the incident, the poet virtually abetting their efforts to shrug it aside with his own **What then?** (462).
- 465 **bare** is probably adverbial, but the sense is similar to that of adjectival *bar* (‘downright, veritable’) in a similar context at *DT* 150: ‘And borne was abroad for a bare aunter’.
- 467–9 It was held to be a king’s duty, when hosting a public feast (at which the good spirits of his *meyny* should be his priority), to suppress and disguise any perturbation he might be feeling at **hert**: cf. ‘The kyng than comfurthid his knyghtes, all if he care tholed’ (WA 4004; see also First Continuation 3232–41, 8597–9, 8912–19; *Lancelot do Lac* 137; *Parzival* 90.14–16, 99.17–20). Arthur’s followers would here, however, in view of Gawain’s plight, find it difficult to respond to a direct injunction to get back to beer and jollity; Arthur therefore, with nice tact and **hendeness**, implicitly and obliquely calls on them to help him soothe the ruffled calm of the ladies. That his words to Guinevere are said **ful highe** indicates that their target is distinct from their addressee: for the formula implies that what is said is meant to be publicly heard (cf. ‘dit si/mout haut que ... l’oent/l’ont oi’ [says aloud so as to be publicly audible] at *Lancelot do Lac* 341, 361, 584). That concern for any distress Guinevere might suffer is a mere pretext for ‘setting an example’ to the others to cheer up the ladies is further implied by the fact that the poet has not thought it relevant to indicate whether or not the queen requires any such comfort as Arthur so ostentatiously offers her. The clear tactical element in Arthur’s **cortayse speche** to her means that the passage cannot be unproblematically used to prove that her part in the motives later attributed to Morgan (2460) was at all present in the poet’s mind in the earlier stages of the narrative.
- 471 For **craft** likewise used of non-professional occupations or pursuits, the mode of spending time or pattern of activity of particular persons and/or particular times, see 1688 and cf. Chaucer, *Legend of Good Women* 1286.
- 472 **enterludes** were especially associated with the Christmas season: cf. the prohibition (1418) against the playing of ‘enterludes’ on the streets of London ‘duryng this holy tyme of Cristemes’ (*Memorials of London* 669–70). It is clear from this same

prohibition that interludes could involve elaborate disguise ('disgisyyngis with feyned berdes, peynted visers, diffourmyd or colourid visages'). Arthur thus makes light of the Green Knight and the beheading by normalizing them as dramatic illusion.

- 473 **kynde caroles:** *Sir Gawain* provides one of the earliest indications of the special association with Christmas gradually developed, in England, by the carol (*Early English Carols* xviii–xx), which, in its continental origins, was typically a springtime and outdoor pastime; its status as one of the pastimes common at Christmas (cf. 43, 1026, 1655, 1886) is underlined by the adjective **kynde** [natural] and by **these** (here exophoric, i.e. pointing to a class familiar from outside the discourse, rather than referring back to elements within it: cf. 1514).
- 474–5 Cf. ‘“Now may ye go to youre dyner,” sayde Sir Kay unto the kyng, “for a mervalous adventure have ye sene” ’ (Malory 518).
- 476–7 The expression **heng up thyn axe** (Whiting A251) was often used in derision to suggest a botched or fruitless task that might as well be given up (see *Owl and Nightingale* 658; *South English Legendary* II, 482; *Historical Poems* 4/231), though Arthur is wittily adapting it to different effect here. **gaynly** (whose root sense is ‘directly’), as applied to a speech, might well in fact mean precisely ‘wittily’. Adjectival *gainli* occurs in *Sir Beves* to characterize a joking speech: a lord who throws a knife at a messenger kills his own son by mistake, whereupon the messenger ‘spak a gainli [var. *game*] word’ (3103) to the effect that too much sex the night before had obviously affected the man’s aim. Here, as in *Sir Gawain*, *gainli* characterizes a joking speech, though the two poets plainly have very different ideas of what constitutes an apposite witticism.
- 478–80 Bennett rightly draws a comparison with Grendel’s claw (another ‘marvel’ in the form of a ‘weapon’ of awesome size), displayed high up over the hall entrance where all may look at and comment on it (*Beowulf* 836, 926, 983). Axe and claw alike function as what is referred to elsewhere as a **token** (a physical object which survives from and testifies to the truth of an extraordinary story – as, later, does the girdle: 2398–9).
- 483 **double, as derrest myght falle:** cf. 61 and 890 (‘Doublefelde, as hit falles’) and nn. For adverbial *dere* in the context of appointments suitably posh for the occasion, cf. ‘And double fest that day derely was holdyn’ (*DT* 3463), ‘And dighte me derely, and dide me to chirche’ (*PP* B.19.2).
- 484 A&W take this line to belong with the previous sentence. We have assumed (with T&G and Burrow) that it belongs with the next clause: a similar formula at 1952 introduces a new

syntactical unit that similarly characterizes festivity over the remainder of the day **til** (485, 1958) its end came. The adverbial phrase could perhaps be read both as coda to the sentence beginning 481 and as preface to the new main clause at 485 – i.e. as an example of the construction *apo koinou* [in common], which Mitchell (1995: 70–71, 295–6) points out to be natural to the punctuationless habits of medieval writing and thinking.

487–90 Such a direct address to the hero is unusual, though not without parallel (cf. *CT* I.3397–8, VII.3230–33) – and the solemn adjuration here (emphasized by its fitt-ending position and by its contrast with the cheerful scene it closes) echoes the warning to Gawain uttered by the severed head: to turn aside out of fear, to fail to see through anything **tan on honde**, was the mark of a recreant knight (see n. to 456). For the collocation **wothe/wo** and **wonde** as expressing something the brave should not and do not do, cf. *Pe* 150–54, *C* 855, and cf. *MA* 3494 ('I wille noghte wonde for no werre, to wende whare me likes').

489 **frayn**: Gordon glosses *fraynes* at *Pe* 129 'makes trial of', comparing *Sir Gawain* here and at 1549. But 489 is different: it involves, not putting someone else to the test, but trying out by way of seeing through, and is thus closer to 'experience' or 'undergo' – a sense well attested for the similar verbs *fraisten* (*MED fraisten* 5) and *fonden*, which is used by Gawain himself (565) when he declares his own determination not to **wonde** (563) from the adventure he undertakes.

491 Fitt divisions are not explicitly announced in this poem, as they occasionally are elsewhere (cf. 'for here a fitt endes': *WW* 217), but are visually apparent in the MS, in which there occurs at the relevant points an enlarged capital, here T, whose cross-stroke extends through a one-line gap between the stanzas (between which no space is normally left) and whose vertical stroke is four lines deep. *Greene Knight* also signals a new section at this point by the call for attention ('Listen, lords! And ye shall have the second Fitt': 256), which often heralded a new tranche of the narrative (as at *G* 1996–7). These fitt divisions are integral to the narrative structure: Fitt II follows the same opening pattern as Fitt I, a two-stanza prelude on the passage of time and its vicissitudes being in both cases followed by a third stanza introducing a feast at Camelot. A **hanselle** was a New Year gift given as a foretoken of a prosperous year (see n. to 66), here applied to the first instalment of such adventures as Arthur had desired (92–9). For similar transferred usages, cf. the 'luther haunsel' [ominous beginning] to an embassy in *Sir Ferumbas* 1708 and the 'glad hancel' [propitious beginning] to the day in

Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne* 373; the equivalent *estrine* could also be so used in French (cf. the gift of a fine horse, ‘a bonne estrine d’aventure’ [in earnest of good luck (in a forthcoming tournament)], in *Richars li Biaus* 4313). Since in *Sir Gawain* this metaphorical downpayment on adventures occurs on the first day of the **yong yere** (492) – when literal **hanselles** are given (66) – the expression here involves the same witty interplay between literal and figurative sense as had ‘Hang up your axe’ at 477.

492 **yelpyng** generally means ‘boasting’ in ME, but the poet is here reverting to a sense the word could have in OE, in which it could refer to inspiring words relating to heroic matter (cf. *Beowulf* 640, 868).

494 **stafful her hande**: i.e. the court is as full of **wordes** (493) of exciting adventure as their right hands would be if the **sturne werk** were to be done in deed – with possibly some play on *staff*, whether or not this was, or was thought to be, the origin of the expression **stafful**: the *OED* entry indicates that it may have had no etymological connection with a ‘staff’, and other uses show that it certainly had none that was always operative (cf. the mitre and window *staffull* of gems at WA 1666 and 5024); but **her hande** indicates that the poet had a weapon (or its handle: cf. 214) in mind.

497 **mayn** [powerful] does not occur elsewhere of alcohol and so probably represents an inventive alliterative manoeuvre.

498–533 With this description of the passing seasons, a common topos in medieval literature, cf. e.g. Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*, where the fact that the year **yeldes never like**, and that its seasons ‘stant upon debat, That lich til other non acordeth’ (VIII.2840–41), is used, as in *Sir Gawain* (495–500), as a corollary to the vicissitudes of human life – in Gower, as a simile for the ages of man and his passage from youth to old age. In *Sir Gawain*, the passage of the seasons is not merely a simile, but also a narrative fact which provides a literal analogue to the changes in human fortune it is linked with. Cf. nn. to 476–7, 491.

499 This sententia was current in a variety of forms. As noted by Silverstein 1964, one Latin version, ‘Cum fueris felix, quae sunt adversa caveto: non eodem cursu respondent ultima primis’ [if you have been fortunate, watch out for adversity: the beginning and the end do not follow the same course], occurs in the *Distichs of Cato* I.18 (a standard school book up to the seventeenth century) and is quoted in the medieval Latin *Song on the Scottish Wars* 140 to signal the downturn of English fortunes. Another occurs as ‘Principium fini solet impar saepe videri’ [the beginning is often seen to be unlike the end] in Orderic Vitalis (*Historia*

XII.xxx (vol. VI, 314)) and (uttered by Darius to warn Alexander not to become so proud as to forget his 'end') as 'cum semper a primis solent ultima discrepare' in the source of the alliterative WA, where it is rendered 'It limpis noght allway the last to lickin with the first' (3222).

- 501ff **sesoun** is here used in its broader sense [time of year] rather than with specific reference to the four seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter. The poet in fact uses the terms *summer* and *winter* according to a binary rather than a quaternary division of the year (as was not uncommon: see *MED* sv *somer* n¹ (b)). Within this binary opposition, the 'seasons' through which the year is traced begin with **Cristenmas**, followed by the comfortless **Lentoun**, the burgeoning and flowering processes of **somer** (which covers spring and summer), processes which culminate in **Hervest** (521), here used specifically (*MED* sv *hervest* 1b, 1d) of the August month when fruits and corn are harvested, not as a synonym for the season of 'autumn', the **wynter** whose arrival it warns of (522) and by which it is followed (530) being in fact the autumn of the quaternary system, which began with the autumn equinox in September, the point at which the description concludes (532), but which is characterized as announcing the return of the **wynter** half of the year.
- 502–3 **crabbede** is here equivalent to the similarly derived *cankered* (< Latin *cancer* [crab]), and forms the first in a series of vividly concise personifications. **Lentoun** has here none of the positive associations it often had when used as a synonym of spring, and in fact figures as a continuation of **wynter** (see 504). Seen from the point of view of the **flesch**, not of the spirit, it stands liturgically in backward contrastive relation to the more genial season and **fode** of Christmas, rather than in anticipatory relation to Easter. **fraystes** here has the sense 'assays and refines by subjecting to rigour' (cf. 'Silver fraisted with the fire': *Yorkshire Writers* II, 144).
- 504 For **weder** as referring to the return of the warmer weather that is the opposite of **wynter**, cf. 'Winter sceal geweorpan, weder eft cuman' (*Maxims* I B 66). **threpes** reflects a common notion of annual battles between winter and summer weather: cf. 'Thenne summer and winter winnen [strive]' (*Physiologus* 358); the word here contributes to the personifications and the series of energetic verbs (cf. **yernes**, **hyes**, **wrasteles**) which alike 'animate' the passing year.
- 505 **Colde clenges adoun**: the fact that the earth's subsurface temperature is cooler than its surface in warm weather, and vice

versa, was conceptualized in terms of the predominant seasonal ‘quality’ of heat or cold driving down its opposite: cf. ‘The colde comes down from the eyre And into the erthe he dryves thore The heete that hette the erthe byfore’ (*Sidrak* B 2250–52).

cloudes up lyften (i.e. it becomes less cloudy) is a similar semi-technical observation: clouds ‘ner ... to the erthe’ show ‘gretter quantite to the sight’, while those ‘nygh hevene’ seem smaller (Trevisa, *Properties* I, 579).

506 To minds more attuned to agricultural needs, **showres** played a more positive role in the archetypal image of spring than rain does today: Chaucer’s description of an ideal spring likewise begins with *shoures soote* and with the *flour* their moisture engenders (*CT* I.1–4).

509 **Bryddes ... bremlyche**: for the collocation, cf. e.g. ‘Briddes ful bremely on the bowes singe’ (*William* 23). **bylde** [make a dwelling place: cf. 25] was not uncommonly used to mean ‘make a nest’ (cf. the magpies instructed by nature ‘there the thorn is thikkeste to buylden and brede’: *PP* B.12.228); but **busken** [prepare, hasten, be busy] always elsewhere occurs with a human subject (i.e. there is a further personification implicit here).

510 The epithet **softe** was standard with reference to the warmer half of the year: cf. ‘In summer and in softe weder’ (*Physiologus* 154), ‘Now welcome, somer, with thy sonne softe’ (Chaucer, *Parliament of Fowls* 690).

516–18 **with the soft wyndes** serves as a restrictive adjectival phrase defining the particular **sesoun** [period] within the **somer** semester to which these lines refer, the delimiting **soft wyndes** being further specified in 517 as those breathed by **Zeferus** – the predominant (westerly) wind of spring, which ‘resolveth and unbindith winter and bryngith forth gras, herbis, and floures’ (Trevisa, *Properties* I, 574). Chaucer’s famous description of spring likewise alludes (*CT* I.5–7) to the ‘sweete breeth’ of Zephyrus which ‘Inspired hath ... The tender croppes’, i.e. has breathed shoots into being, an image that reflects (as does *G* 517) the notion of the west wind as breathing life into the vegetable world (an idea taken over from classical literature). The deified wind and the **wynne** [joyful] plant (518) continue the series of personifications.

518 **Welawynne**: *wella* (a variant of *wel*) is an intensifier found only in alliterative verse (see Layamon C 6390, WA 2096), and could be interpreted as adverb (‘very’) or as prefix (‘full-’). See n. to 2084. **wynne** (etymologically a noun: see 1765, 2420) figures as an adjective (cf. 1032, 2430, 2456) only in alliterative verse and in *Pearl* (154, 647).

- 519 **donkande**: the verb is used in ME almost exclusively of **dew**, with which it forms a standard alliterative collocation: cf. ‘The dewe appon dayes donkede full faire’ (*P3A* 10).
- 520 **bide**: the primary sense is ‘experience’, but the contrast (**Bot**: 521) with **hyes** and **hardenes** in the next line (in which the plant is chivvied on by a hurrying **Hervest**) indicates influence from the sense ‘pause, tarry’; for the verbs that follow then resume their characteristic force and energy (**hyes**, **drives**, **flye**, **wrasteles**).
- 521–4 The dustiness of late summer (523–4) is traced back to its cause in **droght** [dryness], which shows that **Hervest** at 521 refers to the August season in which corn is harvested (*MED* *hervest* 1b and d), i.e. late summer, not to autumn (*hervest* 1a), which is not dry and which is included in the **wynter** semester of whose imminent arrival Harvest warns (522). The pronouns and verbs continue the personification. **hardenes** has the same sense as at 1428, where the huntsmen *harden* [urge or chivvy on] the hounds (cf. *MED* *hardenen* 2b). *MED* erroneously cites *G* 521 (sv *hardenen* 1a) as an otherwise unattested reflexive usage carrying the sense ‘grow firm or ripe’; but **him** in 521 (as in 522) is an object pronoun referring to the personified **wort** (518). A&W detect an improbable punning secondary sense (‘makes him hard with fruit’) in **hardenes him**, but *harden* = ‘ripen’ is not attested; in the examples of the verb in *Ormulum* (1487, 1567), cited by *MED* sv *hardenen* 1a (‘make firm’), the reference is to the firming of dough during baking, not to the ripening of corn.
- 525 **Wroth wynd ... wrasteles** continues the sequence of personifications, the verb vivifying the otherwise stale metaphor implied in the adjective *wroth* (often used of the wind: cf. 319, *Pa* 132). The same verb, when used of wind at *C* 949 and *Pa* 141, suggests tumultuously swirling gusts, whereas here the wind’s ‘wrestling with the sun’ is presumably a compressed way of saying that it drives clouds across the face of the sun to bring about an overcast sky. Since the description proceeds only as far (532) as Michaelmas (29 September), these winds are the gusty ones associated with the autumn equinox (22/23 September): cf. ‘gret wyndes than Threw doune the frutes ... Levyng theym some bare of that whyche they hade Afore Myghelmas’ (Ashby 3–6).
- 526 **lausen**: regularized from MS *laucen*. T&G read the MS as *lancen* (< AN *lancer/launcher* = jump, spring), but, as Anderson notes (n. to *Pa* 350), in all cases where the word definitely represents the AN verb (1175, 1464, 1561), it is spelled *-aun*. In the present context, it is worth observing that the more active verbs (**drives**, **wrasteles**, **yernes**) represent the actions of personified forces,

while verbs indicating change or loss of state are associated with their effects: 'loosen' is thus consistent with **lyghthen**, **grayes** and **rotes** in 526–8.

527 grayes: the verb is not otherwise recorded before the seventeenth century. The coinage, from the adjective *grey*, lends force to the standard antonyms *green* and *grey* (cf. e.g. Henryson, *Testament of Cresseid* 164, 178, 221, 260).

528–9 rypes and rotes formed a standard alliterative contrast (cf. *CT* I.3875), to which the poet has added **ros** to provide a compactly comprehensive survey of the entire vegetative cycle. The adverbial phrase **in yisterdayes** at 529 likewise transforms a commonplace into a powerfully effective line in which present seems to turn into past even as one reads.

- 530 **wyndes**: it is to *wend* or *win* that this poet most commonly resorts when a *w*- verb of motion is required. *Wend*, however, is not used of motion *hither* (which is at issue here), though *win* certainly could be (cf. 1537, 2215). It appears that *wind* has been selected here and at C 534 because of the appropriateness of its more specific sense to, respectively, the circular motion of the seasons and the movements of a fox (cf. *G* 1707). **as the world asks** [in accordance with the rules governing life in this world] figures as a b-verse elsewhere: cf. WA 4750 ('And eftir wele comys wa, for so the werd askis') and (with reference to the laws, moral and/or natural, governing *human* conduct) MA 2187, PP B.Prol.19.
- 531 **No fage** is the emendation (of MS *no sage*) adopted by nearly all editors, the similarity in medieval script of *f* and long *s* easily explaining the scribal error assumed. For **fage** [deceit, flattery] occurring in the expressions 'this is no fage', 'withouten fage' (i.e. 'in truth', 'no kidding'), see *MED* sv *fage* b.
- 532 **Megheltasse mone** is not the Harvest moon, as is sometimes suggested, for that is nowhere else so referred to, but the lunar cycle or month (i.e. September) in which Michaelmas falls: see *MED* sv *mone* n¹ 2(c) and cf. 'Columbyne shall be gadered in lammes mone' (*Leechbook* 142), where *lammes mone* means 'the month (August) in which Lammas falls'. The autumn equinox takes place in the month in which Michaelmas occurs, and that month therefore marked the turn from summer into the first of the two **wynter** seasons (cf. 'Septembre ... is ende of somyr': Trevisa, *Properties* I, 533).
- 535 **anious vyage**: journeys were hardly ever undertaken in winter, when travel became unfeasible (Stokes and Scattergood 1984). The fact that Gawain's journey exposes him to the rigours of winter travel is underlined by the date of his departure, for November marked the advent of the winter quarter, which, in the household calendar, began specifically on on All Saints' Day (**Alhalday**: 536), 1 November, when allowances for candles and fuel were increased, winter livery dispensed, etc (Woolgar 1999: 95–6).
- 536–7 **Yet** indicates that Gawain is balancing potentially conflicting duties: though he starts to think of the journey at Michaelmas (532–5), he delays it until after the next major festival, **Alhalday**, when social and devotional considerations make it desirable that he should be in attendance on his earthly lord (**with Arthur**) and hear the service of his divine lord – for All Saints' Day was one of the *festa ferianda*, the festivals which laymen were required to

observe, by stopping work and attending divine service (Cheney 1961: 119). All Saints' Day is listed in the *Lancelot* as one of the days when Arthur regularly wore his crown in plenary court (*Lancelot do Lac* 134, and see n. to G 44), and that fact is sometimes cited in connection with these lines. But there is no indication that the poet is here visualizing such a state occasion (which was preceded by a summons of all magnates owing allegiance to the king); 537 suggests something more intimate, a party thrown specifically **for** [Gawain's] **sake** and implies that Arthur marks the day in a way he might not normally do, on account of his nephew's imminent departure. The phrase reciprocates **with Arthur**, the festival thus furnishing an occasion for each man to demonstrate his regard for the other.

545 **lege lord of my lif** (cf. 'The lege lord of my lyfe to lose or to save': WA 3214) echoes the wording of the oath of feudal allegiance: 'I bycome your man liege of lyfe and lymme' (*English Coronation Records* 179). **leve I yow aske**: though 'leave' might be *taken* with elaborate politeness from others (cf. 595, 1960–61), only from one's liege lord was it necessary to *ask* it (i.e. to obtain 'permission' to depart: cf. Charles d'Orléans, *Songe* 434, 538; WA 5355, 5358). The a-verse thus explains the b-verse and constitutes a covert apology for even mentioning his journey and the reasons for it: 'Since you are my liege lord, I must ask your leave to depart.'

546 **cost** is not here the French-derived noun meaning 'cost, price', but the homonym derived from late OE *cost* [quality, condition]. Gawain is reminding Arthur, not of the 'cost' of the business (the **tenes** of which he downplays: 546–7), but of its 'nature': the publicly pledged troth that now obliges him to make the journey.

548 **boun to the bur**: **boun** in this sense (*MED boun* 4) is usually followed by a noun indicating person or place or by a directional adverb. The anomalous usage here is a reminder of the peculiar want of known destination (or even direction) in this journey: Gawain travels to a known destiny (**the bur**) rather than to a known destination.

551–5 These knights all figure as distinguished ones in Chrétien de Troyes's romances and/or the *Lancelot*, the two best-known authorities on the 'history' of the Round Table. **Ywan** (already mentioned: 113), **Errik** (Erec) and **Lancelot** were the well-known heroes of separate *contes* by Chrétien. Yvain also figures in the *Lancelot* as one of those premier-league knights who are excelled only by Lancelot and Gawain, and to that category also belong: (a) **Boors** (*Lancelot* (M) XL.22), cousin to Lancelot; (b) Bors's brother **Lyonel**, the hero of a set of adventures so major as to

earn him a whole *conte* to himself, ‘son conte tot entier’ (and on those grounds excluded by *Lancelot do Lac* from its own *conte* of Lancelot: 612); (c) the **Duk of Clarence**, who is introduced as cousin to Gawain and brother to **Doddinaual de Savage** (so called because of his fondness for hunting: Vulgate *Merlin* 171) – with whom, in lists, Galeschins (later Duke of Clarence) is often, as here, coupled (*Livre d’Artus* 50, 81, 202) – and as a small knight, but one of outstanding prowess, joint hero with Yvain and Lancelot of a set of adventures (*Lancelot* (M) XI–XVIII) from which the little duke emerges as ranking very high in the tables of doughtiness (XXI.16–17, XXV.2); and (d), **Mador de la Porte**, who figures briefly as the champion of the first of a pair of tournaments in which he is outdone in the second only by Lancelot (LXXVIII.27–32), and whose only other function (apart from a bit part at the end of the cycle: *Mort Artu* 84–5) is to figure in lists such as the present one (XXVIIa.6, XCI.4) – his presence in *Sir Gawain* thus attesting to a detailed and retentive knowledge of that widely read *histoire*. **Lucan** and **Bydver** (Bedevere) were, respectively, Arthur’s butler and constable, and would *ex officio* be involved in all conferences within it. The names confirm the era to which the present tale belongs: that of the *Lancelot*, the period of the ‘adventures’ (see n. to 23–9), i.e. after the battles in which Arthur consolidated his kingdom and before the Grail Quest: for **Lancelot** arrives at court only after the initial battles and Galeschins is referred to as the **Duk of Clarence** only after the city of Clarence is conferred upon him in reward for his signal bravery in the battle before it (*Livre d’Artus* 17–8); but, since this court is still a youthful one, it does not include Perceval, the hero of the Grail Quest, who is a generation younger and who is thus the only significant absence from the knights in the super league here listed (Yvain, Erec, Lancelot and Gawain).

554 Boors: MS *Boos* would suggest Boso of Oxford, a minor character in Geoffrey’s *History*. He, however, belongs to the chronicle tradition, and disappears from the romance tradition, and would, in any case, have been dead before Lancelot arrived at court. *Boos* is therefore usually assumed to refer to the better-known and more prominent *Boors/Bohors* (see preceding n.), for which the spelling without medial *r* would be highly anomalous.

558 derne doel driven: derne (OE *derne* is sometimes read *derue* (cf. n. to 526), *u* and *n* being indistinguishable in the MS). But *derf* is not attested with respect to emotions, whereas **derne** is regularly used of, e.g., ‘concealed’ love, grief, etc (*MED derne adj* 5) and here reinforces the other references to a grief which the court has

at her herte (557), but which is assiduously banished from outer demeanour (541–2, 557, 672).

- 559 **Wawan**: both *W-* and *G-* forms of the hero's name occur elsewhere, reflecting the alternation between the two sounds in Anglo-Norman and northern French (observable in such word pairs as *warrant* and *guarantee*). The variant forms of the name are in this text exploited for metrical purposes: stressed on the first syllable, *G-* and *W-* give useful alliterative alternatives; while stress on the second syllable (as in French) is occasionally useful for rhyming and iambic purposes in the bob-and-wheel (see e.g. 365, 487, 838, 1044, 1975).
- 567–667 The ceremonious arming of the knight was so standard an ingredient of chivalric fiction (Brewer 1982) as to merit inclusion in the comic stereotype of the genre provided by Chaucer in his burlesque romance *Sir Thopas* (CT VII.857–908). The present account differs from the norm in being (as the poem often is) more systematically exhaustive than other romancers felt it necessary or desirable to be.
- 568 Carpets figured in occasional rather than in general use and were especially associated with dressing (Woolgar 1999: 72) and arming. Arms are likewise loaded on a *tapiz*, with the spreading of which the arming scene commences, in Chrétien's *Chevalier de la charrete* (6757) and in the First Continuation (4333, 10672, 12076). With the **tuly tapit** specified here cf. the 'tapiz de Limoiges' on which Erec's arms are placed prior to his arming (Erec 2624). **tuly** (which, with **tarse**, figures elsewhere in the poem as a favoured fabric for interior hangings: 77, 858) was a luxury cloth of rich red colour; forming a background to the **gilde gere** (569) piled on it, it anticipates (as does 603) the gules which provides the field for the gold pentangle of Gawain's armorial device (619–20); the whole scene is thus emblazoned in colours which identify Gawain with civilized court life and provide a counterpart to the green and gold of his opponent. **tyght** is almost certainly a participial adjective rather than a finite verb with passive sense ('was spread'); **lapped** (575) and **Gurde** (588) are also participial and similarly create free-standing syntactical units without finite verb (which is also lacking at 578); for this is list syntax, organized by sequence markers (**First ... And sithen**, 572; **then**, 578; **And**, 582, 584), in accord with a logic common in this context and reflected in the comic repetition of 'and over that' in Chaucer's parodic arming scene (CT VII.861–6).
- 569 **gilde gere** was a collocation often used of armour, which, though made of **stele** (cf. 570), was often overgilt with gold for

visual effect: cf. the ‘guldene gere’, ‘gilden ger’ and ‘giltene gere’ of *Alexander* A 522, *SJ* 550 and *Sege of Melayne* 1098.

- 571–3 The emphasis is on the luxurious softness of the two fabric undergarments – the one made from Tharsian silk (**tarse**), the other fur-lined with **bryght blaunner** (see n. to 154–6) – by contrast with the hard metal of the arms, chafing from which they would help to prevent. These two items Gawain is already dressed in (having required no assistance to don them). A **dublet**, worn under body armour, is a standard preliminary in armings: cf. Lydgate, *Pilgrimage* 7232, ‘Next thy body shal be set ... a doublet ... Theron thyn armure for to dresse.’ This garment could be rich and ornate (cf. the scarlet and gold-worked ones in *MA* 902, 3457), as the fabric of **dere tarse** (where **dere** indicates quality and price) shows Gawain’s to be. ‘Doubletis of damaske & sum of dere Tars’ are cited by the ascetic Brahmans in *WA* as examples of decadent luxury in dress (4800). **crafty** [artfully designed] probably refers, not to this specific garment, but to the **capados** generically (see n. to 186) and its distinctive feature of providing the snugly seamless fit round head, neck and shoulders that suited it for use beneath head and neck armour; **closed alofte** is usually glossed ‘fastened at the top’, but the sense is probably ‘not open at the top’, i.e. terminating upwards in a coif.
- 574–605 Since armour overlapped downwards, knights were armed upwards: cf. ‘von vuoz ûf wâpent in’ [armed him from the foot up] (*Parzival* 560.17; cf. *Song of Roland* 289–95; *Erec* 711–7, 2633–57). Texts from the first half of the fifteenth century provide the closest parallels to *Sir Gawain* as regards precise items and sequence; cf. *Ordinances* 43–4: ‘Firste ye muste sette on Sabatones ... And then griffus and then quisses’ (with which cf. the arming that begins, as in *G* 574–9, with ‘Sabatouns, grevis, cusschewis’ in Lydgate’s *Troy Book* 3.50), the directions continuing through body armour (cf. *G* 580–81), *bras* and gloves (cf. 582–3), the *cote* (cf. 586), the helmet (cf. 605).
- 579 **thrown** in the sense ‘curved, coiled’ is not recorded as used of body parts other than curly hair in *MED*, but in Scots English there are references in Douglas’s *Aeneid* to the one eye of the Cyclops ‘under his thrawn [bulging or perhaps twisted, i.e. distorted] front [forehead] large’ (III.ix.89) and to the wooden horse with ‘thrawin [curved] wame [belly] of tre’ (II.i.70).
- 580 **brayden bruny, of bryght stele rynges**: the *hringed byrne* occurs in OE verse (e.g. *Beowulf* 1245), where the alliterative collocation *brogden byrne* also first appears (*Cynewulf, Elene* 575), re-emerging in Layamon (10543), the only alliterative verse narrative in early ME, and also in the poems of the alliterative

revival (cf. 'Brenyes browdden': *MA* 2807).

- 581 **Umbe-weved**: the verb with this prefix is recorded only once elsewhere in ME. **Umbe** [around, about], as simplex or prefix, is something of a favourite with this poet, and occurs three times as prefix in this passage (cf. 616, 628), reflecting the emphasis on interlocking encirclement in the description both of the arms (cf. **closed**, **lapped**, **knaged**, **Gurde**, **hasped**) and of the heraldic device of the **knotte** (630) in which the account of them culminates. **stuffe** is regularly used of a kind of padding worn as or under armour: cf. 'hitte hym ... Thorghoute the stuff and the thikke maylle' (Lydgate, *Troy Book* 4.1374).
- 586 **cote-armure**, worn over the armour (cf. 'Oppon is armure was he clad with a cote-armure clene [splendid]': *Sir Ferumbras* 552), displayed the same identifying heraldic device as did the knight's shield (see 636–7 and cf. Keen 1984: 126).
- 587 **gold** (i.e. gilded) **spures spend** (cf. **gilt heles**, 777): cf. 'Thay spende hym with his gilte sperres' (*Rowlande and Ottuell* 361). These golden spurs, conferred at dubbing (cf. 'honeret hym ... with order of knight ... Two spurres full spedely spent on his helis, That were gaily overgilt': *DT* 10937–43), were a badge of knighthood, a rank that could be referred to as consisting of 'them that were spooris of briht goold' (Lydgate, *St Alban* 560).
- 591 **lacet over loupe**: **over** is generally emended to *other* [or], but the MS reading suggests a greater degree of (characteristic) precision, with the gilding being confined to the **lacet**. The metal **laches** thus gleaming over every **loupe** might here refer to aglets (the metal tips of laces) – or to slots or buckles through which the ties or **loupes** were passed; for **lacet** used of such a receiving part (for bolt or tie), cf. the metal slots or eyelets implied in the reference to a girdle 'with lacchetes ynow' (*SJ* 752). Armour fastenings could certainly often be, as here, expensively ornamental: 'the buckles, strap-mounts and rivets of fine-quality armours were often ... covered with or made of gold or silver' (Blair 1958: 170), and aglets could be enamelled or jewelled (*Ordinances* 45).
- 592–3 **herknes his Masse**: the possessive pronoun is common – cf. 'Thei ... herden holly here masse' (*William* 1298), 'wende him forth to heren ... is masse' (*Legend of Becket* 1740) – and indicates a part of a normal routine. Line 593 is taken by A&W as referring to the **Masse** 'offered and celebrated at the altar', but this would state the obvious, and **Offred** and **honoured** are better read as past tenses than as participles: i.e. Gawain participated in the Offering and paid worship to his God (a well-attested intransitive sense of *honouren*: see *MED honouren* 1f), the two verbs

amounting to a hendiadys for ‘expressed his reverence by making his offering at the altar’ (cf. WA 164, ‘Honourd [a god] with offyrings’, and 1197, ‘Offirs to his awen god & honours him faire’).

- 597–604 The magnificent **brydel**, **sadel**, **arsounes**, **payttrure** and **cropure** form a counterpart to those of the green horse (164–78), though Gringolet has no bells, a fact consistent with the contrastingly military and civilian aspects of the two matching descriptions of knight and horse: the armed knight in gold on red and the unarmoured one in gold on green (the colour of peace: see n. to 265–6 and cf. Malory 1196).
- 599 **naylet**: saddles were generally of wood, and nails were an essential part of a saddler’s equipment: see *MED* sv *sadelere*(e (a)).
- 600 On decorative bridles and the use of (often metal) bars in ornamentation, see notes to 159 and 177.
- 601 For **apparayl** used to refer to a decorative design, colour or fashion: cf. ‘full shene to shewe, Uppon her steed ... Her paraylle all of one hew, Of a grene welvette’ (*Stanzaic Morte Arthur* 2612–15), ‘ane helm ... Of precyouse stanes the apparayle’ (*Rowlande and Ottuell* 413). The uniting **apparayl** is here gold on red (603), the colours of Gawain’s heraldic device (619–20), which have thus been extended into his harness and which have been anticipated by the gold armour on the red carpet (568–9).
- 605ff The helmet, assumed only when the knight was ready to mount, was always the last piece of armour to be donned. His shield (619) and lance (667) were handed to him once he was in the saddle. Hence these three items are here separated from the rest of the (indoor) arming ceremony. The point at which Gawain mounts Gringolet is not specifically mentioned: it presumably comes in the gap between this stanza and the next, since it must have occurred before Gawain receives shield and lance, and after he dons the helmet (with the fastening of which a knight was often assisted). Helmet and lance, and sometimes shield, would be borne by a squire or other attendant, if the knight travelled with one. When Gawain dons the helm, therefore, it becomes clear that he is to travel unesquired and thus – as is repeatedly stressed in the ensuing account of the horrors of his journey (693, 695, 735, 749) – alone; when he later once again arms and mounts, he receives helmet and lance from the guide only at the point when the latter leaves him (2143).
- 606 Cf. *Gologras* 984 (of a stroke that cleaves a helmet), ‘Throw the stuf ... stapalis and stanis [gems]’. Staples were ‘used to strengthen the helmet, especially at joints’ (T&G). On the essential stuffing or padding for helmets, cf. ‘Thai stuffit helmys

in hy' (*Gologras* 738), busy preparations for battle likewise including 'stuffyng of helmes' (*SJ* 426), while a 'helme well stuffyd' heads the list of accoutrements needed for a judicial joust (*Ordinances* 40).

- 607 **high on his hed**: a tall, pointed helm figures in the two MS illustrations that show Gawain on horseback at the Chapel (fol. 129^v) and kneeling before the king and queen at his return to Camelot (130^r). Its style is consistent with the assumed date of the poem (c.1390): the tall basinet, 'drawn out to an elegant point to the rear of the centre', was common throughout Europe from 1380 to 1420 (Blair 1958: 69).
- 607–11 The neck-protecting **aventayle** was a mail tippet attached to the base of the helmet by a complex arrangement of vervels and cords (Blair 1958: 52, 58; Lacy 1997: 167; White 1953: 113–14). It is included in an arming scene in *MA* (910) and is sometimes mentioned in battlefield contexts as protection against potentially lethal or decapitating sword strokes (*Sir Ferumbras* 5497, 5651; *Waldef* 3797). The **urysoun**, however, figures nowhere else in chivalric narrative, and is the only recorded anglicization of French *horson/hourson*. It was a decorative band attached to the sides and back of the helmet and covered the mechanism by which the helmet was joined to the **aventayle**. See the last entry in Godefroy's *Dictionnaire* sv *horson*, concerning a helmet which is to have attached to it a *horson* of wool, cotton or silk (cf. **sylkyn borde** at 610) and figure 3 in Matsui 2010.
- 609–14 Similar embroidered devices picked out with inlaid jewels occur at 78–80 (Guinevere's canopy), 166–7 (the green clothing), 2026–8 (the heraldic cognizance). For the decorative motif of birds in foliage in embroidery and metalwork, see Evans 1952: 42, 49, 55, and cf. the table vessels and temple vessels at *C* 1409–11, 1464–76 (and nn.), where **papejays** also occur (1465); the *periwinkles* they are coupled with in *Sir Gawain* occur elsewhere among floral decorative motifs, as at *Romaunt of the Rose* 903, as do *true-love* flowers (cf. e.g. *P3A* 120, *Awntyrs* 510), here aptly coupled with *turtle-doves* (which symbolized true love), the collocation finding a parallel in the quaint collective 'a truelove of turtles' (see *MED* *turtel* (a)).
- 610 **borde** is also used of a fabric band or strip at 159, though not recorded in this sense elsewhere in ME. With **bryddes on semes** [birds in stitchwork] cf. the **enbrawdede semes** [embroidered stitchwork] of the surcoat displaying Gawain's cognizance (2028). On both occasions, *seme* is generally understood to mean 'seam' or 'border'; but it is unlikely that the elaborate designs described are crammed into the seams or edges of either the

borde or the surcoat. **Semes** (derived from the verb ‘sew’: cf. ‘sempstress’) in both instances means simply ‘stitchwork, sewing’, a sense not recognized by *MED* but clearly attested in *Octavian* 1865, ‘And taught her maydenys werk of sem.’

613–14 The fine clothes prepared for Siegfried’s expedition are similarly the work of ‘lovely women’ who ‘sat day and night with scarcely any rest’ (*Nibelungenlied* 25). Clothwork was the preserve of women, and ornamental embroidery the characteristic accomplishment and avocation of the well-born woman or **burde** (cf. *PP* B.6.13, *Octavian* 1865). The exquisite cloth on which the romance of *Emaré* centres is the work of an Eastern princess and includes just such ‘Flowres and bryddes’ inlaid with jewels (166–7) as figure on Gawain’s **urysoun**. That cloth was ‘Seven wynter’ in the making (118), the same period of time required by the craftsman for Enide’s saddle (*Erec* 5302) – a rhetorical topos here outdone: the embroidery on this small strap is so intricate as to suggest that *many* women have been employed on it for seven years.

615 References to the golden and/or bejewelled **cercle** or *coronal* occur especially in arming scenes (*Erec* 2654–5, *Rowlande and Ottuell* 416, *MA* 908), and in the smashing of helms during combat, to which the falling gems of a *cercle* ‘worth a toun’ may add a spectacular touch (*Sir Ferumbras* 623; cf. *Ami et Amile* 1495, Second Continuation 30816–17). An ascending degree of **pris** here links the otherwise unconnected **cercle** and **urysoun**, the description of the helmet thus climaxing in its two most sumptuous features.

619–65 These lines on the pentangle are signalled as significant both by the explicitly indicated pause (624) and by MS layout: 619 begins with a decorated capital three lines deep, which (while distinct from the four-line capitals that mark the fitt divisions) acts to asterisk certain passages. Though the five-pointed mullet or *estoile* could occur as an armorial charge (Mann 2009), the term *pentangle* scarcely figures in heraldry, and is not a device borne by Gawain, or by any other knight, in Arthurian tradition. Outside the specialist field of medicine, in which it was a symbol of health, the figure was more generally familiar as an emblem to ward off evil (Bennett; Loomis 1943: 168; Schouten 1968). Its attribution to **Salomon** (625) follows a widespread tradition (Hulbert 1916: 722–3), and the device was commonly called ‘Solomon’s knot’: T&G cite the reference in Kircher’s *Arithmologia* (Rome 1665: 217) to ‘what is called Solomon’s knot’ (*nodo quem Salomonis vocant*). The term was familiar enough to occur figuratively in vernacular and secular contexts: Dante twice used

nodo Salamone as a witty hyperbole for the moral enmeshment produced by, respectively, love and gluttony (*Lyric Poetry* 72a.9–10, 73.1). It is plainly by the term **knotte**, rather than by the Latinate **pentangel** (620), that the present poet assumes his audience will know the figure, for **pentangel** (rare even in Latin, and otherwise unattested in ME) is glossed at 630 by what is declared to be the more common English designation of ‘knot’ and described at 662–5 as the learned and Latinate equivalent (664–5) of **knotte** (662). This **endeles** shape (629–30) and its basis in the number five are here used to give geometrical and numerological expression to the moral-chivalric ideal of **trauthe** (626), and are obviously comparable with the circular gem in *Pearl*, **endeles rounde** (738), and the associated ‘twelves’ that express heavenly perfection in that poem – the circularity and its associated number being in each case confirmed in the circle performed by the poems themselves, in the repetition of their opening lines at, respectively, line 2525 and 1212, and in their 101 stanzas. It is not immediately clear, however, what special qualification or **tytle** (626) the pentangle has to symbolize *truth*, though it is precisely this question that **For** (627) purports to address at 627–30 and which **Forthy** (631) assumes to have been answered. The explanation is claimed to lie in the popular designation **knotte** (630). For both the noun and the verb had strong metaphorical and idiomatic connections with covenants, as in the expression *knit a covenant/accord* (*G* 1642 and *C* 564; cf. *DT* 11460, 13098 and *MED* *knotte* 3(c) and *knitten* 7(a) and (b)); conversely, to break faith was to *loosen* the knot so formed, hence the opposition at *G* 1783–4 between the *fastening* and *loosening* of one’s *faith*. It is obviously its nickname of **knotte** that explains the relevance of the pentangle to the story and to Gawain’s **trauthe**, for it is the knitting of his faith (1642) to covenants that test his *truth* that figures importantly in the narrative, not fives or pentagons (which are not again mentioned). The link formed, via *knot*, between *fives* and *faith* (632) may not have originated with this poet, who seems at 626–7 to appeal to an existing association between these things. All three terms occur in close interrelation in the speech of Shakespeare’s Troilus, as he watches Cressida ‘loosen’ the ‘bonds’ that ‘tied’ her to him by pledging herself to Diomed: ‘And with another knot, five-finger-tied, The fractions [broken parts] of her faith ... are bound to Diomed’ (*Troilus and Cressida* V.ii.157–60). The speech plainly alludes to the *knot* as a designation for a five-membered figure, and to an association between that word and that figure with the pledging of *faith*; the five-membered figure is there the troth-pledging hand, and the

word *pantacle* could be used in the sixteenth century precisely of the ‘hand’ (Hulbert 1915–16: 725), a fact also relevant to Troilus’ complex metaphor.

- 619–20 The rules of heraldry required the alternation of metal and colour between charge and field (i.e. colour could not be placed on colour, nor metal on metal); and in formal emblazoning the field had to be first specified, followed by the charge (Keen 1984: 129). These lines are thus heraldically correct in both form and content.
- 619 **schewed** (cf. 2061) corresponds to *brohte* in arming scenes in non-alliterative verse (cf. *Rowlande and Ottuell* 356, 421, 1208): cf. ‘scheus me myn hache [axe] and I schal note [use] hit today’ (*Joseph of Arimathie* 587–8).
- 624 **thogh tary hit me schulde**: cf. ‘I schal speke a litill more of the dyamandes all though I tarye my matere for a tyme’ (*Mandeville* (Cotton Titus) 106).
- 625–6 With this **syngne** and **bytoknyng** contrast 2433, 2488 and (especially) 2509.
- 627 **holdes fyve poyntes**: for the verb used in the context of mathematical analysis, cf. *C* 1387, *Pe* 1029.
- 630 **Overall** here is usually glossed ‘everywhere’, but it seems more likely that the word *pentangle* is being glossed by the term by which it is most ‘generally’ or ‘especially’ known (*MED* *overall* 2). **Endeles**-ness is a quality often attributed to knots: cf. ‘endelesly ... knytte to hir blessed sone’ (*Mirroure* 35), and the designation *th’endelese tharmes* and *the endeles gut* used of the knot-like coils of the entrails and colon (*MED* *sv endeles* 4). In *Sir Gawain* the epithet likewise indicates, not the knot’s continuousness of outline (which almost any geometrical figure would have), but the intricate interlacings that leave no ‘loose end’ by which it could be unravelled: the repetition of **endeles** at 629–30 follows a reference to the interlocking lines (628) and is matched by the iterative **non ende hade** and **Withouten ende** (657b, 660) following a similar reference in 657a.
- 631–9 The treatment of Gawain’s device is consistent with heraldic theory, according to which arms should ideally be ‘an outward indication of inner capacity’ and should ‘bear witness to a virtue in their bearer’ (Keen 1984: 162).
- 631 **armes** is usually glossed ‘coat of arms’, but it makes little sense to say that the pentangle **acordes** to Gawain’s **armes** in that heraldic sense, since it is his armorial device; 631b means ‘(the heraldic device of the pentangle) is a fitting complement to his shining armour’.
- 633–9 The comparison of moral purity with refined gold is found in

the Bible (Malachi 3:3, Zechariah 13:9). It is also used with reference to Gawain in *Parzival* 614.12–14: ‘I would compare you with gold ... refined in the glowing fire.’ For the moral application of *void*, cf. ‘voide of vices’ (*Troilus* II.173) and for the metaphor **with virtues enurned** cf. ‘enowrnyd with vertues chaste’ (*Pauline Epistles* 1 Timothy 3:2). Here assembled into three parallel participles (**pured**, **Voyded**, **enurned**), the usages constitute a composite simile that recalls the pentangle that Gawain **Forthy** (636) bears **in schelde and cote**, also painted in **pure golde** (620) on the former and **Enurned** on the latter (2027); the two aspects of the simile are continued in the two superlatives relating to the sterling veracity and graces of Gawain’s speech (**of tale most true** and **gentylest ... of lote**), i.e. his truth to his word and his courtesy.

- 636 **new** has not been satisfactorily explained: ‘newly-painted’ (T&G) asks too much of the adjective, and a ‘new’ cognizance adopted by Gawain for this venture (Bennett) is improbable. The pentangle is certainly ‘novel’ heraldry for Gawain (Evans 1968) and ‘novel’ as an armorial charge at all, but it seems overstrained to read **new** as an acknowledgement of either fact. It possibly means ‘different’ in the sense of ‘distinctive’ (cf. 118, 132; *Pe* 879).
- 637 Cf. ‘Everyche his armes depeynt uppon his scheld, Brouded [embroidered] or bete [inlaid] vpon his cote armure’ (Lydgate, *Troy Book* 1.4070–71). Though the present account of the pentangle is occasioned by the device as it appears **depaynt** (620) on the shield, the only other subsequent (much briefer) reference to it concerns the cognizance as it appears **enbrawdede** and **beten** (with jewels) on Gawain’s **cote-armure** (2026–8).
- 640–65 The five sets of five introduced here occupy a stanza which itself consists of twenty-five alliterative long lines. The argument that truth is pentangular requires only divisibility into five, subdivisibility into further fives being a piece of supererogatory virtuosity – though the square of a number always has special significance in numerology (as that of twelve does in Revelation and *Pe* 786). The fives are interestingly grouped in such a way as to suggest the multi-dimensional nature of man, who must make proper use of his faculties as a physical (640–41) being, and as a spiritual (642–50) and social (651–55) one.
- 640–41 The importance of guarding the five senses is a recurring topos in confessional and moral contexts, in which wrong-doing figures as the abuse or ‘mis-spending’ of those senses (see e.g. *Donet* 102; *PP* C.15.255, 16.235).
- 649–50 The detail is modelled on the shield attributed in Geoffrey of

Monmouth's *History* to Arthur, on which was painted (*inpicta*) a likeness (*imago*) of the Virgin Mary, 'to keep her memory always before his eyes' (198). Both the English and the French versifications of the *History*, by Layamon and Wace respectively, emphasize that the image was on the inside of the shield (*Brut* 10555–6, *Roman de Brut* 9293–6). The theologian Robert Holcot attributed to the image (Lectio 36, p. 127) a morale-boosting effect in battle; his words were Englished in a vernacular sermon (quoted, as is Holcot, by Gollancz) of about the same date as *Sir Gawain*: 'recitat doctor Holcote ... that Kyng Artoure had in the innare parte of ys shelde [*interiori parte scuti sui*; **inner half of his schelde**] an ymage [*ymagin-em ... depictam*; **image depaynted**] of Oure Lady Mary ... the wiche ymage he wold behold [*quam quotiens ... aspexit*; **when he blusched thereto**] when that he was werry in batell [*in bello fatigatus*; **in melly**, 644] and feynte; and anon for conforte and hope that he had in hure he waxed freshe and herty ayeyn [*spem recuperavit et vires*; **his belde never payred**] and in ... good poynte for to feyghthe [fight]' (*Middle English Sermons* 325–6). The final detail attributes to Gawain that invigoration of his prowess the knight more typically receives from the presence or remembered image of his mistress (cf. *WW* 428–32, Malory 723–8); the fact that Gawain is thus 'Mary's knight' is later appealed to in deprecating the moral danger he faces from a woman who herself appeals precisely to the romance logic of heterosexual love as the conventional inspiration for chivalric heroism (1512–19).

651–4 The virtues listed are those often associated with *gentillesse* and the ideal knight. None of them except courtesy is ever mentioned again or has any significant part to play in the poem. *Fraunchise* differed from 'largesse' in that the 'free' or 'large' generosity denoted by both words always involved a material object in largesse, whereas the magnanimity displayed in *fraunchise* did not (for a distinction and conflict between the two, see *Chevalier de la charrete* 2836–51). The virtue that thus stands opposed to Gawain's later self-interested retention of the girdle is not **fraunchis**, but (as Gawain states: 2381) **largesse** – which does not figure in the present pentad. As to **clannesse**, a chaste hero is often assumed, the comically formulaic Sir Topas being thus 'chaast and no lechour', despite being attractive to women (*CT* VII.742–5); and Gawain does resist the role of romantic lover his hostess tries to force upon him, but he does so to avoid treachery to his host (1773–5), not to preserve his chastity, which is not an issue in his mind or the narrator's. The need to preserve **courtaysye** to the lady certainly is an issue (1773) and is the

virtue Gawain was famed for, both outside the text and (914–27, 1297–8, 1525) within it. But this virtue is not here picked out for any special emphasis, which falls instead on **pyty** (654), which has no relevance to the story, though the stress given it here is consistent with its status elsewhere as the supreme attribute of the *gentil* disposition: Chaucer follows Dante in emphasizing (in a reiterated line: *CT* I.1761, IV.1986, V.479; *Legend of Good Women* F.503) that ‘pitee renneth soone in gentil herte’. The poet is plainly assembling these pentads with an eye not to the story – which is in suspension (624) – but to general notions of excellence and how they can be set out on a base of five. What is relevant to the story is the notion of *truth* as an essentially comprehensive and composite virtue: the hero is from the start (343–61, 536–65) required to observe tact and courtesy when doing the honourable thing – for, in the moral taxonomy of the poem set out at 640–54, **courtaysye** is not a virtue separate from truth, but a subsection of it. Hence Gawain’s dilemma in Fitt III when caught between discourtesy to his hostess and treachery to his host: to fail in courtesy is not a lesser sin than to fail in truth, but a failure in the social aspect of truth itself, which requires keeping faith with others *and* respecting their feelings and their dignity.

- 657 **halched** (on which see n. to 185) completes a series of verbs – **umbe-lappes and loukes** (628), **happed** (655) – that match a similar sequence with respect to the armour (575, 577, 578, 581, 590, 607, 616), of which the virtues are an internal counterpart. See Mann 2009.
- 659 For the opposition **sammed ... sundrede**, cf. ‘Of merke and kinde and helde and ble, Sundring and samening tagte he’ (*Genesis and Exodus* 457–8).
- 660–61 At 660b, the MS has *jquere fynde*, the first letter being very indistinct. Editors usually follow T&G in emending to ‘I oquere fynde’, construing ‘[end] which I find anywhere’, and interpreting 661 as a concessive clause (‘Wherever the device started or came to an end’). But 660 alliterates on *n* (cf. *Pa* 66), so *noquere* (Gollancz and Cawley) is the more satisfactory emendation of MS *jquere*. However, a concessive clause beginning ‘Wherever’ in 661 is ruled out on grounds of both content and form (Stokes 2009). First, it would concede precisely the point so strenuously denied in the repeated assertion that the device has no **ende** (629–30, 657, 660a). Secondly, the *wh*- indefinites never appear in this corpus as *wherever*, *whoever*, *whenever*, *whatever*, but always as *wh-so* or *wh-soever* (or are represented by the *wh*- word alone). **ever** (661) must therefore follow **where** as an intensifier: cf. **Who ...**

- ever** at 682, meaning ‘Who in the world’ (= no one). **Where ever** in 661 therefore means ‘Where in the world’ (implying ‘nowhere’). Line 661 must therefore be an indirect question introduced by 660b, which we have emended accordingly.
- 661 game:** here in the otherwise unrecorded sense ‘something devised, device’.
- 662–5 knotte ... pentangel with the peple called With lore:** cf. 629–30 and n. to 619–65.
- 662 Therefore:** the analysis of Gawain’s *truth* as a pentangle has taken the form of a logical demonstration, not a fanciful conceit. The first stage of the ‘proof’ (**For**, etc: 627–30) is an account of the pentangle, the second (**For**, etc: 632–5) is an account of Gawain which involves a proposition (632) that itself then requires demonstration (640–55); and all three stages in the argument conclude in a *quod erat demonstrandum* (**Forthy** 631 and 636, **Therefore** 662) relating back to the proposition introduced by **why** (623).
- 663 red gold:** this common ME expression is explained by *MED* sv *red adj* 1f(a) as a reference to gold proved pure ‘through becoming red when heated’. Whatever its origin, the collocation was of long standing: ‘the reddest gold’ and ‘the whitest silver’ occur in OE as typifying worldly wealth (*Old English Homilies* 201). The repetition of **red** in the present line attributes to the otherwise contrasting **gold** and **goules** some underlying tonal congruity. Both gold and scarlet (a dye used for royal garments: Evans 1952: 39, 44) were associated with magnificent wealth (cf. *PP* B.2.11–16) and their common redness is here alliteratively collocated with **Ryally**: cf. *Sidrak* L 11089 (‘the reed signifieth realte’) and *G* 2036, where, with reference to the scarlet ground of Gawain’s device, **ryal** again collocates with **red** (and **rich**).
- 670 sperred** (not a plausible form of ‘spurred’ or ‘speared’) seems to represent the sole recorded survival into ME of OE *sporran* in the sense ‘strike’ (ME *sperren/sparren* having elsewhere the meaning ‘dart, spring’, as at *Pe* 1169); the spurs find a parallel in the claws to which there is a recorded application of the verb in OE (*clifra spyrringe*).
- 671 Firestone** [stone for striking sparks] was current as a term for flint, but **stonefire** [sparks struck from stone or flint] is a concise compound not recorded elsewhere.
- 674–83** The lines seem to be a reworking of a passage in *DT* in which Achilles condemns the war as a waste of life in a foolish cause and asks, with reference to Palomydes (recently killed): ‘Hade not Palomydon ... prevet *the bettur*, To have lengit in is *lond* and his *lyf* hade, And have deghit in his duche as a *duke noble*, Than be

britnet on bent with a buerne strang' (9755–8); their similar wording expresses in both texts a briefly anti-heroic perspective on events. The conferral of a dukedom on Gawain is represented – not simply as a fate self-evidently preferable to being butchered (680) – but primarily (as the collocation in 677 of **wyt** and **Warloker** emphasizes) as an act of political prudence: since the term *duc* often implied a sovereign ruler (*duche* in *DT* renders *regnum* in its source, Guido's *Historia*), precisely the same reasons which had prompted him and the other knights to extricate Arthur from the game (362–5) would have weighed against its transference to him, and would have prevented him from claiming that he was unimportant and that his life would be little loss (355).

- 680 **brittene** to **noghte**: cf. 'Oure burghes ... that brette is to noght' (WA 2383). The verb (whose etymological meaning is 'to divide') occurs in this MS only in *Sir Gawain*, where it is used in all three of its commonest applications: to the destruction of cities (2); to the cutting up of an animal carcass (1339, 1611); to the butchering or hacking of a human body by a sharp weapon (cf. *DT* 9758, quoted in n. to 674–83).
- 681 **alvisch**: cf. the 'elvysch knyght' of *Guy of Warwick* (2) 11317–61, where the word translates OF *faé* and is used, as in *Sir Gawain*, of a knight antagonist with supernatural powers who, as is also the implication in *Sir Gawain*, exploits his own invulnerability to assault and entrap other knights. **angardes pryde**: *angart* is a word of uncertain etymology, word class (it occurs as noun, adjective and adverb) and even phonology, since it can appear as *ang-d/t* or *aug/awg-d/t*, and, owing to the similarity of *u* and *n* in medieval scripts, it is not always clear which form was intended. Pre-1300 instances are northern and show a clear sense of 'pride': the devil fell 'thorw his awgart [var. *pride*] unto hel' (*Cursor F* 478); post-1300 instances are confined to alliterative verse, where the word is often found in collocation with *pride*. B-verses similar to the present one occur at *DT* 9745 ('thurgh angard of pride') and 5015 ('your angard desire') and *WW* 267 ('in angarte pryde'). The reference is plainly to pride of an excessive kind (consistent with the sense 'very, extremely', borne by the word when used as an adverbial intensifier in the form *angerly* or *augerly*); it is presumably the **alvisch man** who is being accused of it (i.e. of an arrogantly aggressive use of his powers).
- 683 **cavelouns**: often emended to *cavelaciouns* (cf. **cavelacioun** at 2275), a word used to characterize the specious cavils of lawyers, etc. But *caveloun* may be an authentic form showing influence from *haveloun*, which (while its primary sense related to the

circuitous course run by a hunted animal: cf. 1708) often had a similar meaning, and is used of oversubtle reasoning (which is the accusation here) at *Laud Troy Book* 7882 and *PP* B.10.131.

684 Cf. e.g. ‘And I wepte water warm and wette my wonges’ (*Joseph* 647).

689 **wylsum way**: the adjective *wil* meant ‘off the beaten track’ (as at 2084) and *wilsom wayes* indicated unfrequented and dis-orienting terrain offering no clear paths to the traveller; the collocation often occurs with reference to ‘desert’ or ‘wilderness’ (cf. 701); see *MED wilsom adj* 1(b).

691 **Logres** is the French form of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Loegria*, and it is after the manner of French romance, not after that of Geoffrey’s *History*, that the term is here used (i.e. to designate the British kingdom ruled over by Arthur); for it evidently here includes Wales (697), whereas Kambria (together with Cornwall) is specifically excluded (*History* 30, 46, 48, etc) from the kingdom south of the Humber to which Geoffrey gives the name *Loegria*.

693 **ledeles** (MS *leudles*) occurs only here. Though it has been taken to refer to lack of companions, that is a matter dealt with at 695–6, and ‘without attendants’ better suits the focus in 693–4 on the want of the physical amenities a **hostel** (cf. 776) would provide. *Lede(s)* also refers to servants at 851, 1119, 1989.

695 **fole**: as a mere synonym for ‘horse’ the word is confined to verse, where it often figures as a rhyming or alliterative expedient.

696 A similar comment is made with respect to Gawain when he is alone and in danger in *Walewein*: ‘[there was not] anyone to whom he might complain or to whom he might reveal his thoughts except for God and the Virgin Mary’ (7685–7).

697–701 For the journey that brings Gawain initially into north Wales, a starting point in south Wales is indicated – probably Caerleon, which was commonly associated with Arthur’s court: see Geoffrey’s *History* 208, *MA* 64 and the Welsh Triads (*Trioedd* 85). The geographical specificity of the passage is not untypical of English (as opposed to French) Arthurian romance (cf. the journey, in the opposite direction from that of Gawain, made by Guinevere from York to Caerleon via Chester in *MA* 3911–18). More distinctive is the topographical specificity of **the fordes by the forlondes** and **the Holy Hed**, where the definite article implies familiar points on a known path. Gawain’s route coincides with one recorded as actually taken by travellers. Gerald of Wales’s itinerary (c.1180), described in his *Journey Through Wales* 115–98, began in the south, took him to Caerleon, the site of ‘Arthur’s famous court’, from where he followed a roughly coastal route up to Anglesey and across the north coast

(fording the Conway by boat), crossing the Dee back into England to arrive at Chester (at the southern boundary of the Wirral). A similar route appears on the fourteenth-century 'road map' known as the Gough Map: running along the west and then the north coast of Wales, the marked route clearly fords three waterways (the second labelled as the river Conway) opposite Anglesey lying **on lyft half** when travelling west to east – these crossings occurring near the coastal **forlondes** or headlands created by the debouchment of the rivers; the route then crosses the Dee estuary at Flint into Cheshire. The word **over** at 699 and 700 similarly transports Gawain successively over the fords of the north coast and the Dee estuary into the Wirral. He crosses the Dee at **the Holy Hed** (700), possibly a reference to Holywell on the Dee estuary – where the well in question marked the spot where the head of St Winifred was chopped off and miraculously restored (Gollancz). Holywell, however, lies further seaward than the crossing points in Gerald of Wales and on the Gough Map, which are much further upriver, where the estuary is less wide; but those routes are devised to join a major road (running through Chester) in England, whereas Gawain's crossing point is dictated by no such next stage of a planned itinerary. If **the Holy Hed** is not a reference to St Winifred's holy well, the *head* is more likely to refer to a headland than a well: in the absence of a first element referring to water, *head* in toponymy designates land projecting upwards or outwards in the form of what the poet calls a **forland-** [headland] and associates with a **ford-** [crossing place], as with the place actually called Holyhead in Anglesey, which could be referred to as 'Unum forland vocatum le Holyhede' (Botoner, *Itinerarium* 153, cited in *OED* sv *foreland* 1).

701–2 On fourteenth-century complaints and commissions respecting malefactors and armed gangs in the Wirral, see Savage 1931. **God other gome with good herte** is usually assumed to be a variant of the Norse-derived expression 'God and good man' (Olszeweska 1933: 81), which can occur as grammatical subject ('him luveden God and gode men': *Peterborough Chronicle* 79) or object ('forto agulte God or any good gome': *PP* B.16.7–8). In *Sir Gawain*, the caesura (after **gome**) suggests, however, that **with good herte** is not an adjectival phrase qualifying **gome**, but an adverbial phrase qualifying **loved** – as does standard ME usage, in which '*of ... herte*' would be more normal for adjectival function, whereas '*with ... herte*' is almost always adverbial. It therefore appears that the line contains, not a variant of 'God and good man', but an instance of the common collocation of *God* and *gome* (cf. 549, 696, 2470).

703–8 The scenario here – a protagonist travelling in search of someone after whom he makes continual enquiry – is not uncommon (cf. Vulgate *Merlin* 460, *Livre d'Artus* 268), and it would be perfectly normal for a knight so sought to be referred to by the colour of his arms and armour, as in *Cligés* 4676–7 ('... aloient Demandent le noir chevalier'). Indeed, the frequency of such expressions as 'le chevalier vermeil' or 'le noir chevalier' makes Gawain's enquiries about a **knight grene ... of the Grene Chapel** superficially unremarkable. Anyone able to make a positive response would, of course, have understood that 'the green knight' meant something more uncommon than it would normally imply; but as it is, all give their solemn negatives (706–8) to almost comic effect, without realizing what they might well have regarded as the lunacy of the question.

706 **nikked** (from *ne ic* [not I]) **him with nay** (cf. 2471): the idiom occurs both within alliterative verse (*William* 4145, *Gologras* 115) and outside it (*Amis* 2188).

709 **gates straunge**: for the adjective applied to ways that are obscure and unfamiliar, cf. 'Otho wente oute of Ynglond; and, though he went straunge weyes, yet was he aspied' (Capgrave, *Chronicles* 155). These **straunge** paths (through unnamed territories) are the opposite of the known and familiar route (through named places) implied by the definite article at 697–701. The bob-and-wheel is thus employed to lose Gawain off the geographical map on to which his journey has hitherto been plotted. Though the unspecified **gates straunge** lead him into a 'somewhere' realm that discourages such precise localization as has been attempted by some of the poem's enthusiasts, the text nevertheless does create the impression, by the specificity of 697–701, that Gawain ends up somewhere in the poet's own dialect region of Cheshire, the landscape of which certainly provides the setting pictured for forthcoming events (Elliott 1997: 116–17).

710 **bene** [pleasing] occurs only here with prefix *un-*. In connection with **gates** (709), **unbene** indicates the tough going that is the opposite of what figures elsewhere as the 'brode strate and thane weg bene', that opposite being a narrow, unpaved and uphill path 'ayien the clife and ayien the heie hulle' (*Poema Morale* 341, 351).

711 **His chere ful oft con chaunge**: the collocation of *chaunge* and *chere* elsewhere invariably means 'to alter expression', i.e. 'to look distressed or disturbed' (as at *Pa* 368; see *MED* sv *chaungen* 2(a) and 3). But it appears from 2169 ('And oft chaunged his chere the chapel to seche') that the expression here means 'He often looked this way and that'; though such a usage is not recorded

elsewhere, it is consistent with others in which *chere* refers to the direction of the gaze: 'lieve la chiere en haut' [he looks up] (Vulgate *Merlin* 352), 'thyderward he caste ys chere' [he looked in that direction] (*Sir Ferumbras* 346).

- 714 For *frend* and *fremed* elsewhere in alliterative verse, cf. MA 3343 ('I [Fortune] hafe bene frendely, freke, and fremmede tille other'), PP B.15.141, *Gologras* 909.
- 715–17 Water crossings were typically the sites of duels with knights who had undertaken (often as a chivalric exercise) to 'guard the ford': see e.g. *Chevalier de la charrete* 730–32 ('En cele lande avoit un gué [ford] Et d'autre part armez estoit Uns chevaliers qui le gardoit'), *Lancelot do Lac* 179–80, First Continuation 13860–64.
- 716 **bot ferly hit were**: cf. 'So was scho ferd and afright, a ferly ware ellis' (WA 395), 'And full fele other folke, als ferly were ellis' (P3A 310), where the b-verses mean 'as was not wonderful'. The similar expression in *Sir Gawain* is used to very different effect: it indicates, not the unremarkableness of the fact at issue (Gawain fighting his way over a ford), but the iteration of drama to the point where it is the unremarkable that would have been (**were**) remarkable.
- 719 Cf. the joy that 'tonge might non telle the tenthe del for sothe' and 'It were toor forto telle treuli al the sothe' (*William* 4671, 5066). Subsidiary adventures are passed over even more summarily on Gawain's return journey, where the **mony aventure** the poet does not intend to record **in tale** (2482–3) finds parallels in intermediary *aventures* elsewhere in romance of which the *conte* will not speak (e.g. *Livre d'Artus* 268, Vulgate *Merlin* 457, *Lancelot do Lac* 178).
- 720–23 *Desertine* or *terre asalvagie* [wild territory] was assumed to have fauna to match, and those travelling through it regularly encounter *gent tresfelons* (as at 701–2 and 717) and just such a mixture of savage beasts – real and (though probably often credited with actual existence) mythical – as are here listed (the **wormes** [reptiles] at 720 being either dragons or snakes: the word was regularly used of both): cf. *Protheselaus* 3890–92 (dragons, serpents, tigers, lions, unicorns, bears); WA 3922–3 (snakes, serpents and *warlawes* [monstrous men]); *Song of Roland* 306–7 (*bestis* and *wolves*); *Moniage* 2480–556 (bulls, serpents, huge lizards, toads and a giant); *Kyng Alisaunder* 4758–9 ('wormes and othere merveilles').
- 721 **wodwos** [wood creatures], or wild men of the woods, are often mentioned as decorative motifs, and the word is found glossing or glossed by 'satyrs' or 'fauns' (the half-animal denizens of the forest that figure in classical myth). **knarres** (cf. 1434, 2166) was

used of knotty excrescences or protruberances (cf. 'knur'); as a reference to a crag, it figured in northern place names such as Knarford, but is otherwise recorded only in *Sir Gawain* and at *Owl and Nightingale* 1001 (where it occurs in a characterization of northern territory); the topographical features and terminology in the poem often have such vividly local precision (Elliott 1984).

723 anelede: Latin *anelo* regularly glosses or is glossed by 'pant', but *Sir Gawain* provides the earliest actual use of the rare verb *an(h)ele*, which occurs in early fifteenth- and sixteenth-century usage with the meaning 'pant after (= long for)'; and only in *Sir Gawain* is it used of the literal panting occasioned by the literal pursuit to which it here gives alarming audibility.

724 On drye, see n. to 335.

726–8 The often-adopted emendations of **was** (726b) to *nas* [= *ne was*] and **schadden** (727) to *schadde* may be somewhat anachronistic in the degree of grammatical correctness they assume essential for acceptable ME. Line 726 probably represents a loose, mixed or elliptical construction of a type not uncommon in ME. The lack in 727 of numerical concord between subject and verb is also frequent, especially in the case of nouns which could be thought of as collectives (**water** = drops of water). Lines 727–8 form a periphrasis for sleet or hail: cf. 'And whanne that clowde sholde in droopes fall, With colde ben they frozen all, And that sholde have falle rayn to grounde They fallen thenne on stones rounde' (*Sidrak* B 4379–82).

728 fale: *fallow* referred to the fading or withering of greenery: cf. 'thare groued never gryss ... Bot evermore be ded and dry, And fallow and fade' (*Northern Passion* R 1902–4).

729 Nere slayn with the slete: cf. 'neir slane with snaw and sleit' (Henryson, *Fables* 1698); the context gives relevance to the latent personification ('killed by the sleet'): the alliterative collocation of **werre** and **wynter** (726) introduces a presentation of winter as a parallel form of assault, the overhead frozen sources of water (727, 732) rushing down from a height, as his animate foes had done (721, 723), on the vulnerable figure below.

736 wye: MS *kny3t* results in the only instance of clashing stress in the bob-and-wheel that cannot be solved by assuming historically justified final *-e*. Emendation to *wye* restores both iambic metre and alliteration to the line (Putter et al. 2007: 130).

737 The appeal to Mary here reinforces the special relationship between her and Gawain which the poet has introduced (see 649–50 and n.), and as a result of which Mary figures in the poem as a kind of tutelary goddess to the man who is 'her knight' (1768–9). For the idiom *make mone to* [address one's grievance

to, appeal to], see *MED mon n*¹ 4.

740 meryly often has very weakened sense (*MED mirili* 3 and 4), and, in the context of a journey, may have acquired the vague meaning ‘without mishap, in due course, duly’ (cf. *CT VII.301*), a usage perhaps influencing *C 804*, where the adjective would otherwise seem, as would the adverb here, an inert and inept recycling of the collocation with *morn(ing)* found at *G 1691* and *C 493*.

743–4 Both **hasel** and **hawthorne** were commonly classified as types of hedge or bush. The line of vision (obstructed by objects that block the light) is thus descending downwards and inwards to claustrophobic effect, from the high encircling hills (742a), to the massive shade-casting trees (742b) clustered under them, to the densely entangled shrubs beneath. **hore wodes** and **holtes hore** were standard expressions, referring probably to shade and blocking of the line of sight, for **hore** [grey, ashy] was also used to mean ‘gloomy, overcast’; but the word is not elsewhere applied to specific trees. **harled** is a verb not otherwise attested in ME, though its sense is deducible from ME *herlyng* [wattling] and from post-medieval dialectal and agrarian *harl* [twist].

745 rogh, raged mosse rayled anywhere: in connection with moss, the adjectives have the sense they bore when applied to hairy animates (*MED ragged* 2(a) and *rough adj* 3), and thus mean ‘forming a crudely shaggy covering as of unkempt, matted or tangled hair’: cf. ‘I sigh hire [an old woman clad in leaves] al mossy and of mosse al rouh’ (*Pilgrimage I*, 91). **rayled** is typically used (cf. 163 and 603) of a pleasing aesthetic effect that is the antithesis of what is suggested by **rogh** and **raged** (cf. the oppositions at 952–3): i.e. the tangled or **harled** (744) vegetation is an antitype of the artful interlace the poet elsewhere delights in (see e.g. 190, 609–14).

749 misy is not recorded elsewhere in ME, but *mizzy* occurs from the seventeenth century as a dialect word for ‘quagmire’. It is apparently cognate with OE and ME *mos* [bog], which is twice recorded in collocation with **myre** and *marsh* (*MED sv mos n*¹ 2).

753–4 In invocations, **Mary**, alliterating with *mild* (a fixed epithet for the Virgin: see *MED mild(e adj* 2(c)) and/or *mother*, regularly follows God: cf. the prayer for succour ‘to the King of heven And to his milde moder’ in *William 3026–7* (cf. *Amis* 2360; *MA* 3998, 4040–1; *P3A* 664–5); but the usage has a special appropriateness to Gawain (see n. to 737). The superlative form in which *mild* here appears is metrically motivated: it enables the caesura to fall between adjective and noun (cf. 938).

755 highly is sometimes glossed ‘earnestly, devoutly’ (a sense it has

at 773), but Gawain's point is, not that God cannot be worshipped devoutly in the wilderness, but that honouring Him with the ritual dignity proper to that 'high feast' (cf. 932, 1033) requires **herber**. For **highly** = 'honourably, nobly', see *MED heighli adv* 1.

- 755–6 For the attendance at midnight Mass (the first of three Christmas Day Masses) by the laity, cf. *Amis* 2251ff. After the midnight Mass, the congregation was also expected to remain for the immediately following service of Matins (see Young 1933: I, 21).
- 757–8, 762 The prayers are rudimentary ones, for Gawain is a layman painfully aware of his want of the clerical professionalism which civilization would give him access to (755): the *Pater Noster*, the *Ave Maria* and the Creed were the three devotions which children had to be taught by the age of seven (cf. *Pe* 483–5) and which formed the first texts encountered in acquiring literacy from ABC primers (Tarven 1988: 137–8). *Crist cross/cros Crist me/thee spede* – a formula known even to the simple shepherds of the *Towneley Plays* (12.419) was also a distinctly unerudite locution: cf. 'How long agoo lerned ye, "Crist crosse me spede!" Have ye no more lernyd of youre a b c?' (*Prohemy* 425–6).
- 760 This is one of several acts of confession performed by Gawain, inside and outside of Christian ritual (cf. 1880–2, 2385–8, 2501–4), though his acknowledgement of the specific sin relevant to the plot occurs only in the latter context (2378–88).
- 763 The stanza begins with a three-line-deep capital (see n. to 619–65). Concatenation on **sayned** underscores the miraculous answer to Gawain's prayer the castle seems to constitute. For the ritual repetition of the talismanic gesture of crossing **thrye** [three times], cf. *Bible en François* 74 ('Seint Peter ... blissid hem thrice with the signe of the cros'), *Legend of St Edmund* 78. The prayers of a travelling knight are answered with similarly wondrous immediacy in *Sir Ferumbras* 3955 ('Nad he noght that word ful speke ...'), *Generydes* 56–60, *Walewein* 248–56.
- 764 For the inceptive sense of **was ware** ('became aware'), cf. *Pe* 1096, *Pa* 249. An alliterative flick of the wrist transforms wilderness into civilization, **wode** into **won**, in a skilful adaptation of the collocation of **ware** and **won** (for which cf. 'Syne war thai war of ane wane wrocht with ane wal': *Gologras* 237).
- 764–70 The encircling ditch with drawbridge, the raised site (on a **lawe**), the situation on a **launde** amid a **prayere**, and the enclosure by a **palays** are all typical features of the ideal castle

(often, as here, declared to be the best to be found) as it appears in romance: cf. ‘Une fermeté, *La plus bele c’ainc mais trovast ... En une lande estoit assise ... Et se fu close tot entor ... de molt bon palis ... bon pont fort torneis* Sor le fosse qui molt ert grans Et toz plains d’iaue’ (First Continuation 11770–82; cf. 15154; *Livre d’Artus* 289; *Gui* 12227, 12321). The **palays** [fence] often encloses a **park** (cf. Marie de France, *Eliduc* 800–801), a much-prized amenity (*William* 2845, *Sir Degrevant* C 70), since it contained woodland (*G* 770) which served as covert, the **park** being in fact often a game preserve (cf. Douglas, *Aeneid* XII.Prol.176–7); the palisaded park here (768–9) heralds the hunts that occupy so much of Fitt III.

769 **pyned** [empounded, enclosed] qualifies **park** (768), not **palays** [fence]. The surrounding **palays** serves to impound the game in the **park**; cf. ‘Bot pyned thare in a parroke [enclosure] inparked as bestis’ (WA 4829).

771 **on that on side** seems to state the obvious, whatever sense of **side** is involved. The footgloss assumes **side** = ‘direction’ (*MED side* n 7a). But it could mean ‘lateral face of a house’ (cf. *Pa* 451), in which case the phrase = ‘on the one side of it’ [the castle]; **side** = bank (*MED side* 3b(b)) would give ‘on its side of the moat’ or ‘from his side of the moat’.

772 **schyre**, *schene* and *bright* are often used in alliterative verse of trees, boughs and leaves (cf. *C* 605, *Pe* 284, *MA* 1760, *DT* 345–5), apparently in reduced sense (‘fair’), any residue of their primary meaning perhaps implying ‘sunlit’. **schyre** is, however, here attracted by **schemered** and **schon** towards its literal sense of ‘shining’, the trees looking less grim than they did (743) because partaking now in the flickering shine of the castle intermittently seen through them. In the counterpoint between this resplendent civilization and the grim wildness of the terrain traversed to reach it, the poet is developing an opposition that exists in more embryonic and incidental form in other romances: cf. the deep forest (‘walt ... lanc unde wît’), high mountains and marshy moors that bring Gawain to a castle that also emits a splendid shine (‘werden glast’) in *Parzival* (398.10–27). Undulled by traffic smog, and often whitewashed (see n. to 796–801), stone castles are regularly represented as shining white and bright (cf. ‘li mur ... reluisoient encontre le soleil’: Vulgate *Merlin* 363), in the visual as well as the verbal arts: see, e.g., the chateaux of Saumur and Mehun-sur-Yèvre (contemporary with the poem) in the illustrations for September (fol. 9^v) and the Temptation of Christ (fol. 161^v) in *Très riches heures*.

773–5 **highly**: in view of the gesture of reverence, the sense

‘devoutly’ may be shading into that of ‘ceremoniously’ (cf. 755 and n.). For the removal of the helmet as a gesture of gratitude and respect, cf. 2407–8: Gawain’s social and devotional instincts are remarkably integrated – as are those of the poem, which here (**hendly, gentyl, courtaysye**) characterizes piety and divine grace as aspects of ‘courtesy’.

775 courtaysye (MS *cortaysly*) **had him kyd** is correctly glossed ‘had shown him courtesy’ by previous editors, who have not, however, emended the MS, though *kithen* in this sense is invariably constructed with noun object, not adverb (*MED kithen* 3b and c): cf. 263 (‘here is kyd courtaysye’); *Ywain* 3660 (‘And curtaysi ye have me kyd’) and 3764; *WA* 2868. *Kithen* is likewise transitive (with *that* as pronoun object) at *C* 1435a (‘That schal I cortaysly kythe’, meaning ‘That shall I demonstrate in a courtly way’); it thus provides no support for the unemended MS.

776 Cf. *Royal Historie of Generides* 166: ‘A faire place there he sigh ... And praid to God of goode hostell’. Since God was normally addressed in prayer by *thou* (cf. 753–6; *Pa* 282ff, 413ff), **yow** indicates Gawain’s prayer is to both Jesus and Saint Julian (774) – the saint specially invoked by travellers in prayers for good hospice (‘qui ab itinerantibus pro inveniando bono hospitio invocatur’: Jacobus de Voragine, ch. 30), variously termed ‘guod in [inn]’, ‘guod hereborewe’, ‘gud herbry’ in *Legend of St Julian* in the *South English Legendary* (88, 102, 152) and the *Scottish Life of St Julian* (17). The French equivalent used by Gawain also occurs at Chaucer, *House of Fame* 1022 (‘Seynt Julyan, loo, bon hostell!’); in French romance, *bon hostel* is of course the regular term for the good hospitality frequently met with by knights, *l’ostel Saint Julien* figuring as a description of peculiarly excellent hospitality (e.g. Second Continuation 26946; cf. *CT* I.340).

777 gederes is usually emended, perhaps rightly, to *gerdes* (= girds [strikes]), in view of 2062 and 2160, with the former of which the emendation makes the present line nearly identical. Such exact repetition of whole lines is not characteristic of this poet – who does, moreover, use the verb *gaderen* in ways not otherwise attested, as at 421, 2160, 2260 and *Pa* 105, where **Gederen to** provides a close parallel with **gederes ... to** here (both instances involving application of a part of the body, hands or feet, to an object in order to control its movement). The **gilt heles** here and at 2062 are a reminder of Gawain’s status as a knight (see n. to **587**; contrast 2153).

778–80 With the prayer followed by the path **chauncely** taken, cf. the experience of the benighted traveller of *Generydes*: ‘To God he prayd to send hym some remedy. And as God wold, hym happyd

- in a way Which brought hym streyte to a goodly place' (56–8).
- 781–2 **breme** clearly parallels **faste** and means 'firmly', not 'speedily', as it is mis-glossed in *MED*, which also misleadingly cites the line as the only instance in which the verb *upbreiden* is used of drawing up a bridge, thus obscuring the match in idiomatic style, sense and construction between the two lines: *breiden up* (here inverted for metrical reasons) was as regularly used of the raising of the drawbridge (cf. 'Braid(en) up (the) brigge(s)' at *DT* 10464, *SJ* 619) as was *steken* [close, fasten] of the securing (by bars, chains or 'staples') of the gates (cf. *Pe* 1065; *WA* 1205; Douglas, *Aeneid* VI.i.81).
- 784 reflects close familiarity with French romance, the sturdy defensibility of whose many fine castles is often indicated by a semi-personification involving the negated verb *craindre* or *duter* [fear]: cf. 'Ne dute engin ne nul asalt' (*Protheselaus* 6336), 'si forz que nule rien ne dote' (*Conte du Graal* 5691); First Continuation 1826.
- 785 Editors sometimes transpose **bonk** and **blonk**, since 786 clearly refers to the former. But 785b can be read as a parenthetical relative clause; and, with regard to *hoven*, though *preposition* + *place* figures more frequently as an adverbial modifier than does 'on horseback', the latter is well attested: cf. 'on blonkis huffit' (Douglas, *King Hart* 171), 'hovedd on his stede' (*Sir Tryamour* 1428), 'hoved on horsbak' (Layamon 489).
- 786–7 The ideal castle typically has surrounding ditches said to be *parfont* (or *haut*) and filled with water (which the words *mote*, *dich*, etc. did not necessarily imply). The **double ditch** has parallels in the 'doubill dykis' of *Gologras* 239 and Douglas, *Aeneid* X.i.54, Troy's 'depe dikes and derke, doubull of water' (*DT* 1566), Malory's 'towre ... double-dyked' (308) and the excellent castle 'a double fosse tous plains d'iaue' (Vulgate *Merlin* 402). Though there were castles that actually had two moats, the term 'double ditch' itself probably refers to an extra-wide moat, created by digging two ditches close together (Thompson 1997: 125).
- 789 For the collocation cf. 'Harde stones for to hewe wyt eggit toles' (*StE* 40).
- 791–2 For such projecting towers or **garytes** as a feature of a defensive wall of **hard-hewen stone** (789), and for the collocation with **gay**, cf. 'And all strong ston wall sterne opon heithe, With gaie garites and grete' (*Pierce the Ploughman's Crede* 213–14). With respect to their **loupes** [arrow-loops], **louked ful clene** is explained in T&G as a reference to shutters, but the example they cite actually concerns a moveable shield structure,

not a castle wall; see Matsui 2010, who thinks it unlikely that shutters (emergency measures put up in time of siege) are involved here (133). The poet is commenting on the artful design of the **loupes** (which had to provide an opening for archers while nevertheless remaining securely enclosed: McNeill 1992: 95–6).

793–4 The **barbican** acted as an outer or forward fortification for a city or castle: cf. *Promptorium* 23 ('Barbican byfore a castelle: Antemurale'), *Lancelot* III, 341. It thus stands here in opposition to the **halle**, seen **innermore** [further in], the move from the outer barbican in the perimeter wall to the inner residential quarters of the castle proper bringing with it a pronounced shift in descriptive emphasis, from strength and solidity, **hard-hewen stone** (in 782–93), to an elongated elegance (in 794–802) that prompts a comparison with **paper** (802). See the illustrations in *Très riches heures* for March, June, August, September and October, which all similarly show a white, crenellated castle with intricate clusters of pinnacles and chimneys rising behind an outer fortified wall, which, for October, is itself battlemented, *enbaned* at intervals and has inset windowed turrets.

795 **Towres telded bitwene**: cf. 'Tilded full of turettis and toures of defence' (WA 1274). **troched ful thikke** is paralleled by **Troched towres bitwene** at C 1383. Elsewhere in ME, derivations from French *troche* [cluster] occur only in technical reference to a deer's antlers or a cluster of pearls. The relation, if any, between these usages and the architectural application of the term (which occurs only in *Sir Gawain* and *Cleanness*) is not clear.

796–801 The **fylyoles ... ferlyly longe, chymnees** and **pinacles** correspond to the **fylyoles longe** and **Pinacles** appearing on the lids of the cups **as casteles arayed** in *Cleanness* (1458–64), the lids representing the structures that rise above the **castel carneles** (G 801). **fylyoles** (< French *fillole* [column, pillar]) is, like **troched**, recorded only in these two texts. **fyed**: MED assigns MS *fyzed* to *feien* [join] and glosses 'matched in style'; but it seems rather to have a passive version of its more normal sense: Gawain's eye is moving up the towers (795) to the pillars or spires that 'were attached to' or rose up out of them. Also rising up beyond the roofline are the **Chalk-white chymnees** (798): cf. 'Chirches and chapells chalke-whitte blawnchede [whitewashed]' (MA 3039); whitewashing is also referred to at PP B.3.61 ('Wowes do whiten'). The ideal castle certainly typically gleams white, as does that of *Livre d'Artus* 186 ('vous avez veuz ces murs blanchoyer') and the one in the Second Continuation 22568–9 whose stonework is 'plus blans que nois negie'. **that blenked ful white** (799) probably refers back to the **chymnees**, seen white

against the **bastel-roves**: in the *Très riches heures* illustrations for September, October and the Temptation of Christ, the pinnacles rising from the towers are painted gold – and are presumably the equivalent of the **mony pinnacle paynted** (800), which are the third category of the spires in which the description culminates.

801–2 clambred (cf. 1722) is a Norse loan recorded only in *Sir Gawain*. The lavishness of elongated detail prompts the comparison with a model castle made out of material (**paper**) more pliable than stone. The simile provides an interesting elaboration of the one in the Second Continuation, where Perceval comes across a similarly veritable ‘picture’ of a castle, in which ‘Tor i avoit haute et bien faite, Ausint con s’ele fust portraite [depicted, portrayed]’ (24261–2). The castle-cups of C 1458–63 testify to the popularity of model castles as decorative motifs (Ackerman 1957); paper ones would have been encountered by the poet among the elaborate paper coverings provided for dishes (described at C 1407–8), where castles were a favourite motif: ‘bake-metes and dissh-metes ... peynted and castelled with papir’ are condemned as wasteful display in the Parson’s Tale (CT X.445).

807–15 The wal (809) from which the porter speaks is that of the **barbican** (793) or gate-house, not that of the castle behind it. Cf. ‘Sir Gareth rode unto the barbycan of the castell, and prayed the porter fayre to lette hym into the castell’ (Malory 352). With 809–14 cf. ‘“Porter, our errand I pray thee say” ... “I shall say your errand full well” ’ (*Carle of Carlisle* 156–8). See also *Gui* 12164–84 and *Livre d’Artus* 236 and 274, where a similarly civil and friendly porter, not venturing to give admittance on his own authority, readily conveys a request for **herber** (805) to the master or mistress – and where it is similarly assumed that *uns chevaliers erranz* has especially good claim on *herbergage*: the equivalent **knight erraunt** of 810 provides the first recorded instance of that expression in English.

814 wye: usually assumed to be here a parenthetic term of address. The alliterative synonyms for ‘man’ do occur as vocatives (cf. 258, 2274, 2284; *Pa* 199, 492), but only where the speaker is being deliberately unceremonious, and they would be unlikely to be so used by a civil and **plesaunt** inferior (808) to a superior. See n. to **1039**. **wye** alliterating with **welcom** does occur as a vocative (uttered by an equal whose ‘welcome’ is ironic) at 2240; but the same collocation figures at 938, where the lord gives precisely the reaction here predicted by the porter, and where **wye** is, as we assume it to be here at 814, complement of the verb ‘to be’; **wye** as noun complement often occurs without

article (cf. 1039, 1087, 1244).

815 The MS reads ‘þen zede þe wyze aʒayn swyþe’. But **wye** (like the other poetic synonyms for ‘man’) always figures as an alliterating stave and has here clearly been occasioned by eye-skip to **wye** in the previous line (this second **wye** appearing, in the MS, directly under the first). The line alliterates on **y**, and the most obvious **y**-word for which **wye** is an error is **yateward** or **yateman** (terms for ‘porter’). See Stokes 2009: 265–7.

817–21 For **draght** = ‘drawbridge’, cf. ‘The porter lete the draught [var. *bryge*] doun falle’ (*Partonope* 3462). The **brode** gate (which is here opened after the drawbridge has been let down) would be (looking towards the castle) behind the drawbridge, the **folk** (816) having exited presumably through a wicket (a smaller door set within the gates: cf. C 854, 857), which would not be large enough to admit a mounted knight. When Gawain exits from the castle, the same order is observed: the drawbridge is first lowered, and then the **brode yates** are **Unbarred and born open upon bothe halve** (2069–70) – the **brode** gate being evidently a double and hinged gate (which may thus be referred to by singular **yate** or, as at 782, by plural **yates**). **yarked up** (820) does not mean ‘raised’ (which would imply a portcullis), but was the opposite of *yarked to* [closed] and simply meant ‘opened’ (*MED yarken* 2b); cf. n. to **Wayves up** at 1743.

817–19 **welcom** was a verb often used with reference to *occursatio* [going out to meet a guest or arrivant]: cf. Layamon 8532–3, *William* 1264 and 4390 (‘with a real route he rod hire ayens, / and worthily hire he wolcomed’), which shares with *Sir Gawain* the same collocation with **worthy** (for which see also *G* 1477, *William* 673). *Occursatio* is here accompanied by kneeling on the part of the **folk** [castle staff: 816], but not in the case of the higher-ranking inmates of 824, 830 and 833.

822 The civilities of *herbergage* included helping the knight to dismount, though the aid here specified seems realistically updated to suit a knight more heavily armed than in the earlier French romances, where the assistance takes the form of holding the stirrup (see e.g. *Lancelot do Lac* 435, Bérout 1974–6).

823–8 Hospitable services regularly begin with relieving the knight of his horse and armour (and giving him a mantle to replace the latter: cf. *G* 878): *Conte du Graal* 1416–18, 1772–82, 3059–65; Second Continuation 28423–9; *Yvain* 4675–6; *Fergus* 768–9. The wording of 823, 826 and 852 also recalls French romance: cf. *Livre d’Artus* 114 (‘il fu assez qui les chevaux estable’), 173, 198 (‘se fist desarmer ... si fu assez qui lor aida’), 236, 274.

824–5 Where the **folk** had gone out from the castle to escort Gawain

into it (816), the higher-ranking **Knichtes and swyeres** now **comen doun** from the hall to escort Gawain into that. With 825 cf. C 82 and *Sir Eglamour* C 765: 'Wyth blys [ceremonious celebration] they gon hym hom brynge [escort]'.

828 blasoun: the development of the sense in French was from 'shield', through 'painted device on shield', to the 'coat of arms' itself; thus the word is here being used in its original sense.

832–3 The communal hall was often heated in the earlier manner by a central hearth or brazier. Fireplaces with chimneys (referred to at 798) were a later development (Trevelyan 1973: 71–2), associated with the gradual growth in **chambers** from one of which the lord here issues, in the climax to the socially gradated *occursatio* the stanza depicts (rising through **folk**, **Knichtes and swyeres**, **mony proud man**, to the **lord** himself). The alliterative metre enhances the distinction between the two kinds of room and the heating distinctive of them, the (lexically Germanic) **fire upon flet** (832, 1653, 1925; cf. 1368) characterizing the traditional public hall, and the **chymne** associated with the more intimate **chamber** (978, 1030, 1402), both French-derived words. The terms of the ensuing game are agreed upon in the **chamber** (1030, 1402, 1667), but the exchange ceremonies take place in the **sale** or **halle**, where the fulfilment of those terms thus has a more public setting (1372, 1620, 1925).

835–7 have been variously punctuated and glossed, with a pause placed after **That her is** in T&G and A&W, who treat the words as object of **welde** in 835 (which creates an untypical enjambement followed by an unlikely caesura in the middle of the a-verse). **welde** at 837 is treated as a noun by T&G and Burrow; but only emendation of *al* to *at* in *Awntyrs* 666 ('at wil and al wolde'; Thornton MS 'to welde and to wolde') provides any evidence of an idiom 'at will and at wield', whereas 'wield (*verb*) at will' is well attested: cf. 'slewe the kynges dere And welt them at his wyll' (*Gest of Robyn Hode*, 1464), 'Wenys to wild hire at will and away lede' (WA 1063). Under any interpretation, the repetition of **welde** in 835 and 837 seems inartistic, and **welde** at 835 is emended to *wone* [dwell] by Cawley and Burrow (following Gollancz). The social gesture the lines express ('Treat the place as your own'), however, is unproblematic and common: cf. 'This howse is all atte your comaundement' (*Generydes* 77), 'S'est tost a vostre volenté' (First Continuation 8410–12), 'bien viengiez vos; Li sires estes de çaienz' (*Yder* 4932–3; cf. *Erec* 6544, 'an sa meison me fist seignor'). In our reading of G 835–7, the lord says two related things: 'you are welcome to be lord here' (as in *Yder* and *Erec*) at 835; and 'its amenities are your own to use as you please'

(as in *Generydes* and First Continuation) at 836–7.

- 838 **Grant mercy**, though a little more marked than merely ‘thank you’, was – like Gawain’s other French phrase, **bone hostel** (776) – not uncommon among the *gentil* classes: Gawain’s famed linguistic sophistication (916–27, 1251–5) is not a matter of any Gallicism that goes beyond such phrases as were already naturalized.
- 840 This line – well glossed by A&W as ‘in the manner of joyful men’ – does not imply any distinction between what **semed** and what was, but it does pause on the moment as a pleasing spectacle (reflecting the value attached in the poem to public expressions of good will and good faith).
- 841 Cf. ‘Entre ses bras molt tost le prent, Si li dist debonerement, “Sire, vos soiez bien veignans” ’ (First Continuation 8371–3; cf. *Waldef* 3394–5). **in armes con felde** was a common expression, though **felde** (not the normal form of the infinitive in this dialect) is a rhyming expedient found also at *Three Dead Kings* 86.
- 842 **glyght** is apparently from *glien* [to squint]; the sense ‘look’ (cf. 970 and *Pa* 453) or ‘shine’ (*Pe* 114) – a sense combination it shares with *glent* [glance] – occurs outside this MS only at *Chester Plays* 7.332 (‘aye glye on the glee’) and is perhaps an alliterative usage.
- 843–9 **huge** could mean either ‘of monstrous size’ (and was thus not infrequently applied to giants) or simply ‘big of its kind’ (*MED huge* 2(a)). It here has the latter sense, though its potential to signal the former is consistent with other reminders of the Green Knight: the full beard (cf. 182), here brown (845), not green, and the **stalworthe schankes**, not here giving such uncanny support to their (headless) owner as do the **stif schankes** of 431. The adjectives **bold** (here ‘fine, goodly’: cf. *C* 789), **Sturne**, **stif**, **Felle**, though not quite drained of their battlefield connotations, all similarly have here slightly toned-down senses. The result is a normalized, domesticated and less threatening masculinity, suggesting to Gawain the powerful manliness and authority of the ideal head of a household (848–9) rather than the unsurvivable opponent (201–2).
- 844 **high elde** [age]: for **high** signalling the mid-point between too early and too late, see *MED heigh adj* 6b.
- 845 For the rich brown beard as a feature of the vigorous manliness of an ideal leader, cf. the *beveryn* hair (*MA* 3630) and beard (*Awntyrs* 357) attributed to Arthur and the ‘Bery-brown ... berde’ with which the scribe (mistakenly writing *berde* for *bleaunt*) credited the ideal king in *WW* 91.
- 846 Cf. ‘Thenne thei styrte up on hy with staloworth shankes’

(*Chevelere Assigne* 326).

847 **Felle face as the fire** occurs at WA 5048, also with reference to an impressive male figure. **Felle** in such contexts equates with French *fier* [fierce] as applied non-pejoratively to the pride and spirit of the non-servile – cf. the countenance of authority and the comparable comment in *Gui*: ‘... fier le vis, Ben resemble sire d’un grant pais’ (6939–40). With **fre of his speche** cf. ‘of facund [verbal address] full faire, fre of his speche’ (*DT* 3747), which indicates that it is its courtliness rather than lack of restraint that is at issue. In *Sir Gawain*, this **fre** [noble, generous] speech has been exemplified by the high-bred liberality of 835–7.

850–51 **him charred** is usually interpreted as reflexive; we have assumed that the usage is transitive (see n. to 1030) and reflects a rule of hospitality: a host about to deliver a guest or visitor into someone else’s charge will normally keep that person with him or her until that is done. **chefly** (cf. 978) is the emendation normally adopted for MS *clesly*. The assignment to Gawain of his own special servant is closely associated with the provision of a bedroom (853); the man is later referred to as his ‘chamberlain’ (1310, 2011), bringing him clothing or armour when he requests it and helping to arm him.

853–9 *Sir Gawain* is, as usual, more detailed and systematic in its use of a common descriptive topos; for other references to luxurious bedding in episodes of *herbergage*, see *Ferguut* 949, *Lanceloet* 744–68. In ME a ‘bed’ included the bed-**cortynes** and wall-hanging **Tapites** as well as the sheets and **covertores**, and it was normal for these to be **of folwande sute**: cf. the references in medieval wills (cited by *MED* sv *tapet(e)* (a)) to ‘a bed ... with alle the tapites of sute’, ‘a coverlet wyth a tapete of rede of the same sute’. Gawain’s ‘noble bedding’ (853) includes the scarlet cloth or **tuly** (858; cf. 568) and pure gold trimmings (854, 857) characteristic of luxury interiors, but peculiarly appropriate to this guest, since these are his heraldic colours (619–20).

855–6 The *covertour* was often furred: *hermin* [ermine] *covertur* and *martrin* [marten] *covertur* are referred to in *Romance of Horn* as typical of aristocratic beds (477, 726, 964); see also the entries sv *meniver* (a) and (b) and *coverture* 1(a) in *MED*. On the fur referred to as **blaunner** in *Sir Gawain* (cf. 155, 573, 1931), see n. to 154–6.

857 On these rail-hanging curtains with rings and cords (clearly visible in the MS illustration of Gawain in bed at fol. 125), see Woolgar 1999: 77–8. The term **Rudeles** (< French *ridder* [to pleat]) is here associated with the suspending device of **rynges** (which the term could also be used to refer to: *MED* *ridel* n² (c)):

cf. 'To se the riddels hyngre With many red golde rynge That tham up-bare' (*Sir Degrevant* L 1514–16). The shift from the word **cortynes** (854) to **Rudeles** thus marks the moving out of the focus in 854–7 from the soft furnishings on the bed proper (including the **cortynes** qua fabric) to the associated appurtenances overhead, around and underfoot.

859 Cloth underfoot was used only for dressing (Woolgar 1999: 72–3) and was therefore associated specifically with the bedroom and with arming. The poet has thus no regular term for 'carpet', such a floor-covering being referred to simply as a **tapit** (= 'cloth', usually wall-hanging) spread **over the flet** or **under fete** (568, 859).

860–63 Hospitality rituals in romance include removal of the knight's armour and the provision of a mantle and/or *robe* [set of clothes]: cf. *Chevalier de la charrete* 2534–7; *Livre d'Artus* 292; Vulgate *Merlin* 307, 344. The added detail of a choice of clothes, to change between at will, is (in an age when clothing was proportionately much more expensive than today) a distinctive luxury.

860–61 'Despoil' was regularly used of the removal of clothing, including armour (often termed 'weeds': cf. 271, 2013, 2025).

863 **charge**, **chaunge**: for the collocation, cf. C 1258 and (with reference to the Christianization of heathen temples) *StE* 18 ('And chaungit chevely hor nomes and chargit hom better'). Resort to this collocation may have prompted in alliterative verse a weakened sense of **charge** [load fully, burden]: i.e. 'furnish or supply [oneself] with' (the sense required here and in *StE*; cf. the mercantile sense 'have in stock, be supplied with' recorded in *MED* sv *chargen* 2c).

864–72 The replacement of the knight's armour by civilian clothes regularly gives occasion for comment on his comeliness and soldierly physique: cf. *Lancelot do Lac* 127, 445 ('a merveilles estoit biaux et bien tailliez, et a mervoilles sanbloit preu et hardi chevalier'); *Livre d'Artus* 288; *Yder* 606–7; *Parzival* 228.1–5, 307.7–12. The *Gawain* poet has combined the trope with another: the comparison of personal beauty to spring: cf. 'sîn blic ist rehte ein meien glast' [to look at, he is a piece of May sunshine] (*Parzival* 374.24), 'vo bealté semblable au Mois de Maii' (Gower, *Cinkante Balades* X.22). That conceit is here reinforced by an indirect allusion to the common idea of flowers as the rich new 'vesture' of Spring (cf. *Troilus* I.156), or what Dunbar called 'Flora's mantle' (*Golden Targe* 48), an idea reversed in 866–8 into a comparison of fine-hued clothing with the bright colourfulness of spring. **his visage** at 866 is the equivalent of *sîn blic* in *Parzival*

and means ‘the sight of him’ (cf. *MED* *vis* n²) rather than ‘his face’, since it is Gawain’s clothed form, not his countenance, which prompts the comparison with **ver**.

- 873 prince withouten pere:** cf. ‘Ye [the Infant Christ] are a prince withouten pere’ (*York Plays* XV.122).
- 875–83** A seat by a fire together with a mantle are likewise provided for a guest at *Ferguut* 783–4 (‘Hi sat bi enen groten viere Ende hadde omme heme den mantel diere’); cf. also *Livre d’Artus* 114–15.
- 875, 883** Cf. ‘A chimné with charcole to chaufe the knight’ (*Awntyrs* 446), ‘We chaufe vs at na chymmneys for chelis of wintir’ (*WA* 4416).
- 877 Whyssynes upon queldepoyntes:** a chair was a rare item of furniture at this period (Danziger and Gillingham 2003: 17) and the wood would have required such cushioning. For the attention of providing a cushioned chair for a guest, cf. ‘Fech me a schayer and a coyschen And make this palmere to sytte therin’ (*Sir Isumbras* 579–80).
- 879–81** A *bleaunt* was normally a garment (cf. 1928), but could also indicate a fabric. With the **broun bleaunt** here, T&G compare the ‘robe ... of a blihand broun’ at *Sir Tristrem* 410. For a mantle furred with the luxury pelt of ermine, cf. ‘His mantell was of skarlett fyne, Furryd wyth good armyne’ (*Ipomadon* 370–71).
- 883** For **his chere mended** = ‘he cheered up’, cf. *William* 845, *Cursor* 4232.
- 884–6** Similar preliminaries to a meal are rehearsed in e.g. *Seven Sages of Rome* 4199–202; cf. the meal likewise produced especially for a guest in *Awntyrs*: ‘Sithen they braide up a borde and clothes con calle, Sanapes and salers, semly to sight’ (449–50). On the protocol that dictated the provision of a special meal for distinguished guests not arriving at a time when they could be included in the household meal, see Woolgar 1999: 25.
- 884 telded up a table:** MS *tapit* is usually emended to *tabil*, but the word is invariably spelled **table** elsewhere in the MS.
- 885 clene cloth ... clere white:** for the poet’s appreciation of this element of table etiquette, cf. *C* 634, 1440. On the use of white table linen, see Woolgar 1999: 148–9.
- 889–93** The poet had earlier strictly observed the stylistic ban on the vulgarity of stooping to particularity in culinary matters (see 130–31 and n.). There is a contextual reason for the present itemization: since meat was forbidden on Christmas Eve (see Miles 1912: 287; Woolgar 1999: 90), there is some virtuosity (on the part of the poet and/or his fictional kitchen) in the appetizing variety produced. A fast day prompts a similar breach of the

‘don’t-list-food’ rule at *Erec* 4237–40.

- 889 **sesounde of the beste**: the usual word for ‘seasoned’ in the culinary sense was *savoured* (as at 892 and *C* 825). The verb ‘season’ commonly referred to the mixing or tempering of ingredients. Hence the sense of the verse is ‘cooked with the best ingredients’, not ‘with tasty seasoning’, a matter dealt with at 892–3.
- 890 **Doublefelde, as hit falles**: see n. to 483, where the verb *fallen* also occurs in connection with **double** portions. **as hit falles** presumably means ‘as is proper or appropriate’, i.e. appropriate to the occasion, Christmas Eve, which, though strictly a fast day, was celebrated in court circles with such an elaborate choice of tastily prepared fish as is described here (Matsui 2010: 87) and which makes for no more than token observation of **penaunce** (897) – a compromise between celebration and asceticism of which a poet who had characterized Lent as **crabbede** (502) naturally approves.
- 891 **baken in bred**: since references elsewhere to birds ‘baked in bread’ (as at *MA* 190) indicate that **bred** here means ‘pastry’, this would seem to be fish pie. **brad on the gledes**: the expression was used of cooking both meat and fish, grilling over a charcoal fire being a common way of cooking fish: cf. ‘Hi seye ther hote glede And ffisch therup hi ledde’ (*Southern Passion* 2195–6).
- 892 For these ways of serving fish (boiled, or in a **sewe**), cf. the references in contemporary recipes (cited in *MED* sv *sethen* v¹ 1(e) and *seu* n¹ (b)) to ‘Vihs isodeen in win & water & saffron’ and to pouring a *sew* (of vinegar, sugar and onions) over cooked fish.
- 895 **when** seems to mean here ‘at which point, whereupon’, though the conjunction is not recorded in that sense in *MED*.
- 896 **As hende** is treated as vocative in T&G, where the inverted commas are opened before, not after, those words. But the common expression *as hende* – often *as the hende* when it refers to a single person (cf. 1104) – means ‘like the courteous person(s) he/they was/were’ and is not recorded as a vocative (see *MED* *hend(e)* 1(b)). A&W gloss ‘equally courteously’; but *as* in this idiom does not mean ‘equally’, though the expression is here plainly meant to pick up **Ful hendly** at 895 and thus to imply that the household’s courteous depreciation of the meal matched Gawain’s courteous compliments upon it.
- 897–8 For **penaunce** as a dietary term (‘penitential fare’), see *MED* *penaunce* 6. The verb *amend* also occurs with reference to a second item that excels the first in the *Romance of Horn* 2779 and in *Ipomadon*, where it is twice used of a generous gift politely depreciated as a *simple* [modest] thing, a mere token which will

later be *mended* [improved on]: ‘And thou wilt take this sympull gyfte, It shall be mendyd, be my thryfte’ (470–71), ‘This sympull gyfte thou take of me; I wille mend it or it be longe’ (2676–7).

899–900 Gawain’s mind is being warmed by the wine, as his body by the fire (893). But, since the fumes of wine were thought of as rising from the stomach to the head (see n. to C **1420–24**), **in his hed that wende** does not have the same force as *ModE* ‘went to his head’. Cf. the similar comment in *Walewein*, with similar implications of improved spirits rather than befuddledness: after taking a glass of wine with his food, ‘Doe wart Walewein bat in hoghe Dan hi teerst was’ [then was Gawain in better spirits than he was before] (6765–6).

901a **Then was spied and spured** (for the collocation, cf. 2093): it was a rule in hospitality that guests should never be questioned until they had been fed (cf. 254–5). The convention is found as early as Homer’s *Odyssey* III.69–70: ‘Now that our visitors have regaled themselves, it will be no breach of manners to put some questions to them and inquire who they may be.’ Further examples abound in the French Arthurian romances which are the models for this poem: *Lancelot do Lac* 301; *Chevalier de la charrete* 2073–5; *Cligés* 4985–96; *Erec* 4890–2; *Vulgate Merlin* 345; *Livre d’Artus* 115, 246 (‘et quant vint le soir *apres souper*, si li demanda li preudons dom il estoit & que il aloit querant’), 271 (‘si li demanda la dame *apres souper* ou il aloit en tel maniere’); cf. Second Continuation 32496–7. See also *Ferguut* 1290–91 and Scott’s note to *The Lady of the Lake* I.xxix: ‘The highlanders ... are said to have considered it as churlish to ask a stranger his name or lineage, before he had taken refreshment.’

901–2 The household is clearly oblique and discreet in its queries. But ME had no equivalent for either of those epithets, and some creativity has been needed to convey a correspondent meaning. In ME usage, **spare** as applied to speech would mean ‘infrequent’, and so here implies ‘non-insistent’ questioning. **privy** can have here none of its usual senses (the most applicable, ‘covert’, being always elsewhere derogatory); the usage is an extension of *MED* *prive adj*¹ 3, ‘unseen, obscure’, implying **poyntes** whose purpose (to elicit information) is not obvious. Line 902 figures in *MED* sv *putten* 24(c) as the only example of *put pointe* = ‘ask a question’; but that expression normally means ‘make a point or observation’, and 902 therefore probably indicates that the household did *not* ask questions as such, but ‘made observations’ (e.g. ‘bad weather for a long journey’) intended to prompt Gawain into volunteering information that is *not* directly asked of him.

- 903 The queries so courteously timed and put meet with the answering courtesy of a frankly open response: with **he beknew cortaysly** cf. the reply made ‘mult franchement’ by a guest similarly not questioned as to his identity until after being given a meal in *Protheselaus* (5041–3); for the converse discourtesy of not responding to a request for one’s name in such circumstances, see *Moniage* 2214–15. It is, in any case, a point of principle with the Gawain of French romance never to give his name until asked and never to conceal it when asked: ‘onques mes nons ne fu celez / en leu ou il me fust requis’ [my name was never concealed wherever it was asked of me] (*Conte du Graal* 5566–7).
- 906–27 For Gawain’s reputation as the perfect knight *within* this, as within many another, romance, cf. 387–91 and see pp. 252–3. The excitement caused by the revelation of his identity is conveyed by a move into free indirect speech at 904–7 (lines which obviously represent how the news was heard rather than how it was expressed by Gawain) and 912–14, suggesting an animated buzz that gradually forces itself from indirect into direct speech (916–27), which good manners suppress to a whisper (915).
- 906 **Wawan**: see n. to 559.
- 908–9 This is sometimes seen as a minor narrative cheat or lapse, since, as the host and the Green Knight are one and the same, the former has already, in his role as the latter, met Gawain, and so must have **lerned** as soon as he saw him **that he the lede hade**. But, though **lerned** might suggest ‘found out’ on a first reading, it is protected against inapplicability on a second reading by its not uncommon meaning of ‘was informed, heard’ (*MED lernen* 2). **so lef hit him thoghte** has, of course, a much richer meaning on a second reading than the unremarkable one it bears on a first, it being entirely in accord with the norms of French romance that the lord should be delighted to learn he is entertaining *any* knight (let alone Gawain himself): see e.g. *Chevalier de la charrete* 2551.
- 912 **all pris and prowes**: cf. ‘The prowis and the grete pryse that he aprevyd eftire’ (WA 614). Cf. also 1249, where the lady echoes with her own usual slant on it this general eulogistic summary of Gawain’s reputation for excellence; cf. notes to 916–17 and 927.
- 916–17 **sleghtes** [skills, arts], **termes of**: ‘terms of’ is a locution generally used – as in ‘termes of philosophie/phisik/astrologye’, etc – to refer to a technical or specialist register (*MED terme* 5(b)); the household characterizes Gawain’s graces as a real social *skill* which they can be ‘taught’ by him (cf. **lerne**: 918, 927) – as later, with her own more flirtatious emphasis, does the lady (1525–34).
- 919 **fader of nurture**: ‘father of’ occurs elsewhere in the sense

‘author [founder of, authority on]’; and the compliment here paid Gawain occurs also in the envoy to Chaucer’s *Womanly Noblesse*: ‘Auctour of norture, lady of plesaunce, Soveraigne of beautee ...’ (27–8).

- 927 **luf-talkyng** does not refer to gallant dalliance (as assumed by Gollancz), though the reference could just be to conversation *about* love (A&W) – which was considered to be a courtly skill (see CT I.2203), a skill which Gawain at one point displays (1506–7) and one which the lady too (1523–4) assumes is implied by his reputation as the **fader of nurture**. But *love* probably has here its older sense [anything that causes delight: cf. e.g. 1893 and 2054]: in the only other recorded instance of *love talkyng*, the expression refers to ‘A blestfulle songe’ (by a bird: ‘Lovely Lordynges’ 2). The easy slippage of the word *love* from its older sense to its narrower and later one is certainly relevant to the lady’s expectations precisely of ‘love talk’; but it is also important to distinguish the non-romantic pleasures anticipated by the courtiers from the specifically romantic emphasis she later gives (1520–34) to Gawain’s reputation for verbal and behavioural skills.
- 929 The line combines, to somewhat tautologous effect, three alliterative collocations: for **neghed** and **night**, see 1998 and *Pa* 352, 465, C 1754; for **negh** and **night**, see 1922 and C 484, 803; for **neghed** and **negh**, see 697.
- 930 **chapeles**: ‘A castle normally had a main chapel and several smaller ones’ (Thompson 1997: 128). But **thereto** (933) and **thider** (935) certainly narrow the focus to the main chapel.
- 933 **loutes**: cf. 833; only in this poem does the verb *lout* [bend] figure as a generalized verb of motion. It is either a rare example or an independent extension of an alliterative licence which permitted a number of verbs (e.g. *helden* [sink]: 1922) to be so used.
- 934 The sexes ‘would sit (or stand) separately during the service’ (Bennett), as do the lord and lady in *Sir Gawain*, and women of status sometimes enjoyed a private **closet**, a pew partitioned off by a screen or grill, often situated adjacent to the choir. The present **closet** is also near the choir, since it is ‘through the chancel’ that the lady, on emerging from it, makes her way in order to greet Gawain (942, 946). Some famous medieval love affairs begin when the lady is first seen at a religious service (the likeliest occasion, at this period, for seeing and being seen): Criseyde is first seen by Troilus in a temple (*Troilus* I.162ff), as is Paris by Helen – and, in one version of the story, Helen too is imagined as enjoying the exclusivity of the closet associated with ladies of status: ‘Fayre Elyne ... Taking hir place on the one side

of the temple ... being in here closet, seing this fresh lusty Paris ...' (*Siege of Troy* 279–80). *Sir Gawain* observes its usual decorum in little and large: unlike Paris, Helen and Troilus, neither Gawain nor the lady give any attention to each other until the service is over (cf. 940–41) and Gawain refuses to play the role of the lover-knight of the classic romance 'text' (1515, 1541) which both the lady and narrative convention invite him to play.

- 936 The collocation of **lappe** (= 'loose fold', probably that of the sleeve: cf. *MED sleve* (f)) with **laches** and **ledes** occurs elsewhere: cf. 'ledde hire by the lappe' (*Troilus* III.59), 'Be tho lappe he laght his wyfe' (*Sir Gowther* 86). Chivalric guests are elsewhere similarly led by their hosts by a *lap* (the sleeve at *Walewein* 826, the *pan* [edging] of a mantle at First Continuation 8450), the gesture being comparable with that of taking by the hand (see n. to 947) in order to provide a courteous and friendly escort (Burrow 2002: 144); with the present line cf. 'Li sires l'a pris par la destre [right hand]; A la chapele sunt venu' (*Yder* 851–2).
- 937 For the reinforcement of **couthly** [as a friend] – etymologically connected with what is 'known' or *couth* – by the personal **name**, cf. 'He toc to frofrenn [comfort] hire anann [thereupon] Cuthli bi name' (*Ormulum* 2203–4). **knowes**: 'shows himself happy to acknowledge acquaintance with'; contrast 'hir cuntremen wolde not knowyn hir' (Margery Kempe 74). The line implies a special regard for Gawain personally beyond what politeness might dictate to any guest.
- 943–4 Cf. 'He was fair of flechs and felle' (*Early South-English Legendary* 47), 'Faire of flesche and fell' (*Rowlande and Ottuell* 81). For **colour** = 'facial colour/complexion', see *Pe* 215.
- 945 T&G point out that Geoffrey of Monmouth declares Guinevere to have been the most beautiful woman in the island (p. 204) and that maidens are described as 'lovelier than Gwenhwyfar' in the *Mabinogion* (157). The comparison here acquires an epigrammatic quality by virtue of inventive wordplay: **wener** is the sole attestation in ME of an adjective *wen(e)* = 'fair' (perhaps associated with OE *wenlic* [fair]), the poet's normal *w*-adjective for 'beautiful', **wynne** (2430, 2456), having the wrong vowel for punning identification with **Wenore**, itself an inventively plausible form of the name which, as noted by Silverstein, otherwise appears in the MS as *Guenore*, *Gwenore*, *Gaynour* (74, 109, 2460) – but which (like *Gawain*: see n. to 559) had *W*-variants (*Wanore* in *Lancelot of the Laik* 230) that were useful to alliterative poets: cf. the variation between *G*- and *W*- forms in *Awntyrs* (13, 159, etc) and *MA* (84, 233, etc).
- 946 **cherisch** [extend patronage or favour to] was a social word with

a special sense as applied to guests, referring in that context to attentive respect: cf. 2055 and *DT* 13340–41 (where it also refers to an initial approach in order to extend a greeting): ‘welcomet hym faire, Mykell cherissht the choise kyng with a chere noble’.

- 947 The **other lady** is later identified as Morgan le Fay (see n. to 2446–66), sometimes represented as ugly in the French prose tradition. Leading by the hand was a gesture of ‘taking under one’s wing’; it was considered a sign of good breeding in the leader (Gottfried von Strassburg 5745–9) and a courtesy to the person led (*WA* 3042), a courtesy most commonly extended by a host to a guest (cf. *Conte du Graal* 5724). To take by the **lyft hande** of the person led (leaving free their, not one’s own, right hand) was the more polite form of the action (Burrow 2002: 48–9) and it is that convention which here indicates to Gawain who is leading whom. This in turn signals that the older woman stands to the younger, not as guest to hostess (in which case she would enjoy rather than extend the attention), but as senior to junior inmate: cf. *Conte du Graal*, where a very elderly queen leads a younger one (her middle-aged daughter) by the hand (7850) when the two go to greet their guest (Gawain).
- 948 **auncian** occurs only here as a noun, the word recurring as an adjective with reference to this same lady (1001, 2463). Plainly intended as a term of respect, it occurs both here and at 1001 with **olde**, but implies something distinct (cf. ‘An old auncien man’: *Mum and the Sothsegger* 956), and is on both occasions coupled with signs of seniority in status as well as years: marked respect from attendants especially assigned to her (949) and the position of honour at the head of the table (1001).
- 951–63 feature adjectives associated with youth and beauty and its opposite. **yep** (951) is an epithet closely linked (alliteratively and semantically) with ‘youth’: ‘so yonge and so yepe’ (*DT* 357), ‘yong and yeep’ (*PP* B.XI.18), ‘yong in my youthe and yep of my dedys’ (*P3A* W 270). Rosy **red** skin (952) was a fixed attribute of female beauty, whereas a wrinkled old woman is typically **ylowe** (951) or ‘yelowe in hir visage’, ‘ful salowe’ of face (*Romaunt of the Rose* 4496, 355). **blake** is used twice of the older woman: it has its primary sense at 961 (**blake browes**), but at 958 (**blake chyn**) forms a direct contrast with the **bryght throte** (955) of the younger and exemplifies a usage in which **blake** indicated want of the lustre of **bryght** female beauty (cf. *DT* 8037), a want that is one effect of age: ‘age ... makith me oold and blac of ble’ (‘As y gan wandre’ 46). **blered** (963) also indicates want of **bryght**-ness (cf. *DT* 9134), and ‘bleared’ or watery eyes are particularly associated with age (cf. *PP* B.5.188 and ‘I blind, I bleri’ in ‘Elde

makith me geld' 171).

952 **rayled** (see n. to 745) suggests the decorative quality of the red skin-tone.

953 **Rogh** as applied to skin usually implies 'hairy': cf. Trevisa, *Properties* II, 1252 ('rowhe chynnes with berdes'), *Ferguut* 2407; see also n. to 745. For **rolled** = 'hung loosely', cf. C 790; for loose jowls as an attribute of age, cf. *PP* B.5.189–90.

954–6 For the wearing of one or more kerchiefs inlaid with precious jewels or metal, cf. 'corecheffe clustert with gemmes' (WA 5375), 'kevercheves whyt, Arayde with gold wyre' (*Lybeaus Desconus* 893–4). The pearls here contribute to and set off the white shine of the breast and throat (955–6) which the chosen headdress leaves displayed. At 956, the b-verse gives freshness to a traditional simile: cf. 'his clothes white of hue As hit were ffallyn snow newe' (*Sidrak* B 10271–2; see further Whiting S437).

957–62 The poet is characteristically more technical on female costume than is usual, and the lines include some rare and obscure usages. **gorger** elsewhere refers to throat armour and occurs in ME only here of female dress, though *gorget* occurs in similar application from the sixteenth century on. **Chymbled** (surmised to be related to OE *cimbing* [joint] and/or ON *kimbla* [bundle]) is likewise recorded only here. The **gorger** here supplements **vayles** [head cloths] arranged to cover chin and forehead (958–9): see figure 28 in Newton 1980: 88, and plates 12, 15, 65 in Evans 1952. **enfoubled** – evidently from AN *afubler/enfubler* [dress] – also occurs only here and seems to introduce further veiling at 960, the key terms of which are, however, obscure: **Toret** and **treleted** occur only here, and it is not clear whether the **trifles** are decorative designs of some kind (as at 168) or the accessory (which may be some kind of head cloth) implied by the bequest to a female domestic of a *goune* and a *truffle* (*MED* sv *truffle* 3a). T&G associate **Toret** with the *tourets* [embroidered edgings] mentioned by Evans 1952: 57, 64, but the illustration they refer to (plate 55) shows a fez-like cap that heightens the forehead quite unlike what is implied by G 959 and 961; and, though they describe that *touret* as **treleted**, the term – apparently from French *treleter* [lattice] – is not recorded of headgear in French or English; and the explanation leaves the grammar of **Toret** (noun) and **treleted** (past participle) obscure. A&W and Burrow (accepting T&G's explanation) treat **Toret** as a past participle, as in T&G (who emend to *toreted*), and Burrow glosses the line 'edged and latticed all round with ornamental details'. But the need to posit a participle formed from an unrecorded verb formed from a noun unrecorded in English to

match a verb occurring nowhere else in English and of doubtful contextual significance reflects the unfirm ground editors find themselves on here.

- 958 **chalk-white** (cf. 798 and n. to 796–801) is the emendation to (non-alliterating) MS *mylkquyte* first proposed by Onions 1924: 245 and adopted by most editors.
- 961-2 The veiling here summarized – coming right up to the lips and down to the eyebrows – would be unusual except as mourning dress (see Evans 1952: 36, 58); in romances, certainly, headgear which, as here, conceals all but the brows, eyes, nose and lips occasions special comment and occurs always with the purpose and/or effect of a mask – as with the girl who ‘was wymbelyd’ so as to be unrecognizable at *Generydes* 6858 and the various damsels so veiled that nothing appeared ‘que sol li oil’ (*Lancelot do Lac* 495), ‘fors solement les paupierres des elz’ or ‘fors solement le nez et la boche’ (*Livre d’Artus* 168, 175). Though what is being hidden in *Sir Gawain* appears to be simply age and ugliness, the concealment suggested by such veiling corresponds with the concealment of Morgan’s identity, which is not revealed until 2446–66.
- 964 **mensk** occurs only here as an adjective, but the line is clearly a sarcastic application of the epithet *menskful* often used to characterize an attractive young woman: cf. **the menskful** used of the younger lady at 1268, and the ‘menskful maiden’, ‘semly ... on syght’ in *Harley Lyrics* 14/7, 31 (cf. *P3A* 114).
- 966–7 **thik ... buttokes balwe** (MS *bay*) **and brode**: cf. the ‘buttokes brode’ of the ‘wenche thikke and wel ygrowen’ of the Reeve’s Tale (*CT* I.3973–5), where ‘wel ygrowen’ [well covered] is a transparent euphemism for ‘overweight’. There is no record of an adjectival *bay* with the sense required here, and T&G’s emendation to **balwe** [swelling: cf. 2032] is supported by similar collocation elsewhere (with reference to male physique) of **balwe** and **brode**: ‘Balgh, brade in the brest’ (*WA* 5050), ‘balgh in the breste and brode in the scholdirs’ (*P3A* 112).

- 968 **lykkerwys** applied to persons usually means ‘sensual’. When it means ‘appealing to the senses’, the application is nearly always to food (i.e. ‘delicious’); so the use of the word here in that latter sense implies the metaphor of food (i.e. ‘tasty’), a metaphor supported by **lik** [savour, taste] and evident also in Chaucer’s use of the word in the Miller’s Tale: ‘[Alison] was so ... swete and likerous, I dar wel seyn, if she had ben a mouse, And he a cat, he wolde hire hente anon’ (CT I.3345–7).
- 971–4 Cf. *Waldef* 3459–60 (with reference to the sister of the host): ‘Encontre li atant leva E par congé beisier l’ala’ [he then rose in her presence and, having received permission, went to kiss her].
- 971 **lut**: MS *went*, which leaves the b-verse without an alliterating stave, is usually emended to *lent*. But *lende* – though it can be used of arrival, or being or coming to rest, in a place or state (C 993; *Pa* 201; *G* 1002, 1319, 2440) – does not usually mean simply ‘go’. For *louten* as verb of motion, see 833, 933.
- 973 Cf. ‘With ladies full lovely to lappyn in myn armes’ (*P3A* T 247).
- 975 To ask for *acquaintance* indicated a desire to get to know better or to become intimate or friendly with: cf. *Conte du Graal*, where Perceval says, on meeting Gawain for the first time, ‘Et l’acointance de nos deus / desirroie mout a avoir’ (4466–7); see also *Lancelot do Lac* 352.
- 977 Cf. the courtesy shown by ladies in *William*, ‘curtesli the king of Spayne bitwene hem thei ladde’ (3966), while other women lead ‘other lordes loveli hem bitwene’ (3968).
- 978 **To chamber, to chymne**: the collocation is common (cf. 875, 1030, 1402); see n. to 832–3 on the distinction between the newer method of heating the smaller private **chambers** and the old-fashioned central hearth indicated by the expression **fire upon flet** used of the heating in the main public hall (832, 1653, 1925); cf. *PP* B.10.100, where ‘a chaumbre with a chymenee’ is distinguished from ‘the chief halle’.
- 979–80 Spices and wine were a post-prandial and/or pre-retirement collation – cf. ‘Aftre soper they hade carralles, daunces, and songys to mydnyght, And aftre they dranke and ete spyces’ (*King Ponthus* 61–2) – often served informally in the *chambers* rather than in the public *hall* (cf. *MA* 231–5). The custom is referred to frequently in both English texts – with the wording here in *Sir Gawain*, cf. *William* 4324–6 (‘spices ... and the wines therwith’) – and in continental ones: cf. Christine de Pisan 61 (‘After the spices have been taken, and it is time to retire ...’), *Walewein* 11006–8, *Fergusut* 857–9.
- 981–90 Gaiety (cf. **mirthe**: 982, 985) and *hilaritas* (cf. **laghande**

lotes, 988, a collocation that recurs in connection with the festive hospitality extended to Gawain: 1623, 1954) were a prime rule of hospitality (and would be especially important at Christmas). It was thought proper for hosts to behave even a little foolishly or extravagantly in fulfilment of this obligation (Trudgill 2001: 212–16), and the element of willing buffoonery in the present host's efforts earns him the implicit approval of the poet (cf. **luflych**, 981), as his general determination to **glade Sir Gawan with gamnes** (989) earns him the explicit compliment of his guest (1111).

- 983–5 The hood is to be the prize for devising the best amusement. Clothing was proportionately more valuable than today, and a hood as a measure of value figures in the sport described in *PP* B.5.320–37 (cited by Bennett), where the price of a round of drinks acts to even up the difference in value between a bartered hood and cloak.
- 988 The expression 'make it **tayt** [enjoyable, "fun"]' occurs only here and appears to have a sense opposite to that of the well-attested and similarly structured 'make it tough' ('be obstinate or aggressive or importunate').
- 992 **lord** (MS *kyng*) – the term hitherto, and regularly hereafter, applied to the host – provides the ornamental alliteration that is normal in the bob-and-wheel. On the provision of men to light the way to the bedchamber, cf. *Ferguut* 939–40 ('The lord summoned two pages to light his way for him: he wished to retire'), *Parzival* 641.16–17, *Generydes* 148–9.
- 999 **messes** in the b-verse refers to the separate dishes of which each course consisted (see Woolgar 1999: 159–61).
- 1000 Burrow translates 'with doughty men arrayed on the dais in the best fashion' (A&W 'in the best manner'), but **of the beste** is not elsewhere adverbial, but adjectival or pronominal (cf. 38, 863, 880, 889, 986; C 170, 1179), referring back to or implying a noun; and – since food is the focus of 998–1000 (the diners at the dais being introduced only at 1001–6) – we have taken it with **messes** (999), and assumed line 1000 refers to the waiters who place the dishes on the dais. The **Derf men** serving the dishes perhaps find a parallel in the **kene men** who serve the food in Camelot (482, though **kene** there might mean 'able'): service at table (one of the chief duties of a squire: see n. to *CT* I.100 in *Riverside Chaucer*) was a ceremonial rather than a menial duty, and one in which well-born young men (to whom epithets meaning 'doughty' would be appropriate) were employed.
- 1004–6 The host (who sat at the centre of the dais) was served first (Danziger and Gillingham 2003: 26), the dishes then progressing

down the side tables and simultaneously down the social ranks. The poet's attention to the etiquette governing precedence at meals has parallels both in his own poem (cf. 73) and in feasts elsewhere in alliterative verse, where the detail is a marker of grand style: cf. 'real rinkes ... at the heighe dese ... and alle other afterward on the side benches ... eche digneli at his degre' (*William* 4564–7).

- 1004** The line is problematic. T&G gloss 1003–4 'Gawain and the fair lady sat together right in the middle (of the dais), where the food fittingly came'. But (a) the host and hostess would be in the middle of the dais, flanked by the old woman (next to the former) and Gawain (next to the latter); (b) **come** must have sounded *-e* (to provide the line-ending unstressed syllable) and must therefore be subjunctive – 'would come' suggesting that service is imminent here (and just completed at 1006); (c) **as** does not elsewhere mean 'where' (for which the usual forms in this MS would be 'where', 'there' or 'thereas').
- 1006** **gome at his degre**: MS *grome* is usually retained. But servants normally ate separately, and there is no clear instance in *MED* of *grome* having the general sense 'man' rather than either its original sense of 'boy, young male' or its subsequent one of 'attendant'; it is more likely to be an error for *gome*, especially in view of *William* 5031 (where the reference is to splendour of dress), 'as eche gom in his degre godliche ought', and in view of the fact that scribes were prone to confuse the two words (see e.g. the MS variation at *P3A* 475 and at *PP* A.2.56). For the expression (*at his*) *degree* with reference to the hierarchical principle observed in the seating at feasts, cf. *C* 92 and *William* 4567 ('eche dingeli at his degre').
- 1008–9** Such declarations of inadequate powers of description are common (see 719 and n.), and the reflexive verb **pined me** finds a parallel in *Ferguut*: 'Ine soude cunnen Sine doget vertellen niewer naer, Al pijndix mi, ic hadt te swaer' [I could not come near to telling his bravery; even if I gave myself real pains (i.e. did my utmost), it would be too difficult for me] (4172–4). But 1009 is problematic: whether **And** means 'if' or 'and', the precise force of **yet** (if it has not been inadvertently picked up by the scribe from the following line) and the sense of **poynste** are all disputable matters. T&G gloss 'even if perhaps I took pains to describe it in detail', but the only evidence for such a sense of **poynste** would be *Troilus* III.497 ('His wordes alle, or every look, to poynste') – where, however, it is in conjunction with *alle* and *every* that *poynste* means 'describe in detail'; and the position of **yet** in *G* 1009 might imply that **poynste** actually means something

less than **telle** in 1008 ('And I would perhaps even be hard put to it just to **poyn**te (= outline) it'). *MED* gives 'summarize' sv *pointen* 2(a), citing, however, only the much later Pechoc's *Donet*. But the opposed glosses 'describe in detail' (*Troilus*) and 'summarize' (*Donet*) indicate that in both cases the meaning is in fact simply 'set down in writing', and that well-attested sense of the verb is the one our footgloss assumes.

1012–13 Line 1013 operates to exclude from the strict *sense* of **dalyaunce** [conversation: 1012], **derne** [secret, hidden: 1012] and **play** [entertainment, pleasure: 1014] the sexual *applications* those words often had (see *MED* sv *daliaunce* 3, *derne* love sv *derne* 5 and *plei(e)* 5). Cf. the narrator's comment on Horn and the princess playing chess in *Romance of Horn*: 'Qu'il n'i out un mot dit qui notast vilanie, Mes quant ke dit i out, turna a curteisie' [there was no word spoken which indicated grossness, but whatever was said was in the way of courtly good manners] (2761–2).

1014 **That** (MS &): though incomplete or changed constructions are common in ME, a correlative for **Such** at 1011 is desirable, and the emendation seems put beyond doubt by T&G's points: that the scribe's ampersand may well have been prompted by *p^t* in his exemplar and that the same error seems to have occurred at 1032 and 1386.

1021–2 These lines occur in reverse order in the MS, in which both would have to refer to 27 December (St John's Day), which would thus also be the **last of the layk** (1023), leaving Holy Innocents' Day (28 December) unaccounted for. Holy Innocents' Day must be the **last of the layk**, because (a) that, not St John's Day, was the third of the three days following Christmas (St Stephen's Day on 26 December, St John's Day and Holy Innocents' Day) which had been designated *festa ferianda* (feast days laymen had to observe by abstaining from worldly business and travel: see n. to **536–7**); and (b) the guests depart on the same morning (following the **last of the layk**) as that on which the first of the three hunts takes place (1126–36), and, in the carefully exact calendar of the poem, those hunts clearly occupy the last three days of the year (1062–78, 1950–67) and therefore begin on 29 December, not 28 December. Editors have suggested that a line (preceding 1023) dealing with Holy Innocents' Day must have dropped, but the numerology of the poem is as exact as its time frame, the narrative coming full circle (when the first line is repeated in the last alliterative long line) at 2525 – a number obviously significantly related to the five fives emphasized in the account of the pentangle (632–61) and one

which thus rules out any possibility of a lost line. The simplest solution seems to be the transposition here adopted. The scribe may well have understood **that other** in 1020 in its then common sense of ‘the second’ (*other pron* 1(a) in *MED*) and thus assumed that the line referring to **the thrid** should come next. In fact, **other** bears the sense ‘next (day)’ (see *other dai sv other adj* 3a(b) in *MED*) and **the thrid** refers to the third of the three *festa ferianda* following Christmas, which were often spoken of as a trio of days devoted to a trio of *comites Christi* [companions of Christ], saints who underwent their own version of His martyrdom and whose days therefore appropriately accompany His (Putter 2001: 134).

- 1022** For the collocation of **thro** with *thringen* or the associated noun **throng**, cf. C 180, 504, 754. Verbs of motion are characteristically used in alliterative verse in a sense looser than their strict one, and *MED* gives ‘proceed’ as the sense of *thringen* in this line and at *DT* 10831 (‘Thre yere thriftely throngen to ende’), where the verb is likewise used of the passage of time. But in collocation with **thro**, and in application to a season crammed with revelry, *thringen* obviously retains some of the energy and intensity of its stricter sense (‘squeeze’).
- 1028** MS *stronge* represents ‘strange’ (not ‘strong’), as at C 1494 (n.). **strange** meaning ‘not a resident or inmate’ is well attested: *MED* *straunge adj* 1(e).
- 1030** **Charres**: the MS reads *ledes*, but cf. **him charred to a chamber** at 850, which most editors read as reflexive, but which probably has the same transitive sense as would be required here (where **him** must refer to Gawain). For *charren* = ‘turn’ used transitively, cf. ‘that mon thone unwise ... to rihte wege cyrre’ (*Twelfth Century Homilies* 58; cf. 132).
- 1031** **drawes him on drye** (an expression apparently involving the adjective *drie* [lasting, long]) is usually glossed ‘takes him aside’. But the phrase is elsewhere reflexive and intransitive and consistently means ‘draws back (especially from engagement in battle)’, ‘retreats’ (see e.g. *MA* 3968, 4219); cf. C 71. This would indicate a sense here of ‘retreats (to a corner)’. The lord has already taken Gawain out of the public hall into his own chamber (1030), in order to express his especial thanks and to press him to stay longer (something not to be done in the presence of other guests to whom the same compliment was not being extended); the gesture thus perhaps here indicates, not the confidentiality but the sincerity and earnestness of the thanks and the invitation – uttered out of hearing range (of the attendants) so as not to be interpreted as *merely* a matter of public form. Since Gawain has

not referred to the reason for his journey, the lord may also feel that any questions on that matter (1046–9) should be put with similar privacy.

- 1032** **worschip that** (MS &: see n. to **1014**) **he him wayved hade:** cf. 1976 and WA 846 ('Thof I this wirschip the wayfe').
- 1034** **honour his house** (1033) is here repeated in, but lifted out of the ordinary by, **enbelyse his burgh**, the splendour of the French loan word **enbelyse** ('to make *bel*, beautify') being itself reinforced by the French phrase **bele chere**, which punningly refers back to it, and which is used with an application possible in French, but not otherwise recorded in English (in which it always elsewhere refers to the hospitable comforts afforded by a host or hostelry: *MED bel adj* 2(a)). The Frenchness of the line creates a register appropriate to Gawain's social skills: cf. the phrase **frenkysch fare** [French behaviour] used at 1116 to refer to graces and refinements of manner.
- 1037–8** Cf. 1964. With **the honour is your owne** cf. 1267 ('Hit is the worschip of yourself'), where the lady's compliment on his *bel chere* is similarly turned back on her by Gawain. On the prayerful wish **the High-Kyng yow yelde** – so often heard from Gawain (even when he has no audience: 2055–7) with respect to the hospitality extended to him – cf. e.g. 839.
- 1039** **wye** is treated by some editors as a parenthetical vocative, but that would be inconsistent with stylistic distinctions drawn in the poem. Words meaning 'man' are a form of address used by Bertilak (both as Green Knight and as host: 258, 379, 1072, 1675) and are part of the bluff manner that characterizes him, but not by Gawain, who, when addressing his host, consistently uses the more deferential **sir** (1037, 1050, 1056, 1091), using **sir** and **knight** to the same man even as Green Knight, whom he addresses as 'man' only once, and with deliberate curtness (2284), at the Green Chapel. See also n. to **814**.
- 1046–9** Cf. 'Et Trahans li requiert porcoi il chevalche si armés par si haute feste comme est la nuit de Pentecouste' [and Trahans asks him ... why he is riding out thus armed during such a major festival as the eve of Pentecost] (*Lancelot* IV, 96). Other hosts similarly question their guests as to what need or occasion ('quel besoign') has brought him or her so 'loing de sa terre' (*Lancelot do Lac* 301, 396).
- 1047** **derve:** the MS could be read as *derne* [secret, hidden] or *derue* [bold, stern, rough], *u* and *n* being orthographically indistinguishable. The daylight-shunning shame usually connoted by the collocation *derne dede* is inappropriate here (especially in view of 1050–51). The scribe elsewhere consistently writes *derf*

(never *derve*) for *derf/derve*, but in the present case he obviously misread *derue* as *derne* (under the influence of the common phrase *derne dede*). Editors adopting *derve* (in preference to *derne*) in the present line often gloss ‘terrible’, but *derve* seems to have had that sense only when applied to death, torture, etc. Since Gawain seems to understand **derve dede** as applying to the mission he is on (1050–51), the phrase has here been interpreted accordingly.

- 1051 hasty** (= urgent) is modelled on French usage; for the application to a chivalric mission, cf. ‘por quele besoigne il va a Arrestuel si hastivement’ (Vulgate *Merlin* 371). **wones**: the plural – used of Arthur’s court here and at 685, and of Bertilak’s at 1386 and 2400 – also occurs with reference to the surely unicellular Green Chapel (2198) and at *C* 779 (where it corresponds to *locum suum* in Genesis 18:33). These idiomatic usages of plural with singular sense (cf. *ModE* ‘quarters’) occur in this MS only *metri causa* (to supply the b-verse with its required long dip or unstressed line ending); where metre does not demand the second syllable, the singular *won* is used of the dwelling places of both Arthur (257, 2490) and Bertilak (764, 906).
- 1053 ne** has been supplied. The line clearly requires a negative, and T&G point out that *ne wot in the world* is invariably the form taken by this alliterative expression as it appears elsewhere in both English (cf. *Pe* 65) and ON.
- 1056 enquest** [inquest, investigation] does not elsewhere in ME occur in the sense ‘request, petition’, though the related *quest* is once recorded with reference to a formal petition (*quest(e* 5 in *MED*). The uncommon usage combines with the French vocabulary of the line, the performative nature of the utterance and its redundancy (‘I request of you this request’) to give a solemn emphasis to Gawain’s conjuration.
- 1059 the knight that hit kepes**: cf. 2148, where the verb is not constrained by the alliteration. The relation of the Green Knight to the Green Chapel is expressed in chivalric rather than residential terms: he guards it (*MED* *kepen* v 10), in the manner of those knights of romance who patrol, police or control access to a particular piece of territory (see n. to 715–17).
- 1060 stabled ... statut ... steven**: through his use of quasi-legal terminology, Gawain stresses that his good faith is on the line, and hence the urgency of his need to find the Green Chapel (though it is noteworthy that, with his usual consideration for others, he does *not* reveal that the appointment will result in his death, since that might cast a gloom over the festive season). For the legalistic collocation of **stabled** and **statut**, cf. ‘The Statutes

... her writtyn, And by the kynges auctorite Stabelid' (*English Conquest* 65). The term **steven** [appointment] is repeatedly used of the rendezvous at the Chapel (cf. 2008, 2194, 2213, 2238): a meeting (turning up to it, and at the time and place agreed) was a special test of truth; see 2238.

- 1067 With regard to the grammar of the line (an absolute construction joined to the previous clause by 'and'), T&G compare 1826 and *Pe* 386. **falle feye** is a collocation found early and persisting long, passing from OE verse (e.g. *Battle of Maldon* 105) into early ME (Layamon 316) and surviving into late ME (cf. 'fall down feye': *York Plays* XXXIX.24).
- 1068–78 T&G draw attention to the mixture of formal *ye* and informal *thou* forms in this speech. The inconsistency is not unusual, but is one Gawain never falls into when addressing his host: the latter's politeness is of a kind that can accommodate more familiarity than can Gawain's.
- 1069, 1073 **terme, merk**: *MED*, which often confuses contextual application with definition, assigns these instances special entries ('an appointed place' and 'an appointed or chosen place for meeting'), which misleadingly suggests nonce meanings. The instances belong under *terme* 1c ('A goal; that which one seeks to attain') and *mark(e)* 8(d) ('goal; objective') respectively, of which they are regularly derived applications.
- 1072–3 **forth-dayes** implies 'after daybreak' (cf. 1180), which was in fact quite late at a period when it was common to rise at dawn (Bertilak himself gets up before dawn to hunt: 1126ff); Bertilak means Gawain can 'lie in'; cf. 'I was wont to lye styll abedde tyll it was forth dais, delitynge myself in slepe and ease' (*Tudor Vulgaria* 277). **mydmorn** appears to signify the midpoint of a morning thought of as beginning with the office of Prime (6.00 a.m.) and ending at noon ('Toward mydmorwe ... Upon the hour whan the cloke is nyne': Lydgate, *Troy Book* 1.3203–4); the host is emphasizing the proximity of the Chapel: if Gawain makes a leisurely start on New Year's Day, he can be there by about **mydmorn** (though on that important day Gawain actually gets up somewhat before dawn: 2009, 2085–6).
- 1077 Cf. 'Ge vos i baillera i conduit, / fet li sires, qui vos manra' [I will provide you with a guide to the place, said the lord, who will conduct you] (*Conte du Graal* 5284–5). The 'conveying' of a guest (setting him on his right *voie* [way]) was one of the courtesies regularly extended by hosts in romance.
- 1078 In the later ballad version of this story, the equivalent line reads 'Itt is but furlongs thre' (*Greene Knight* 344), which makes the Chapel even nearer (three-eighths of a mile away).

- 1080 thonk ... thryvandely:** the collocation is peculiar to this poem. *Thryvande(ly)* usually means ‘worth(il)y’, but, since it is unlikely that Gawain is commending his own thanks, the participle probably here derives its sense more directly from *thrive* (= flourish) and means here and at 1980 ‘vigorous(ly)’, ‘plentiful(ly)’. The same collocation occurs also at 1380 (‘Have I thryvandely thonk thurgh my craft served’), where, however, *thryvandely* has its normal sense of ‘worthily’ (since it is there to be construed with **served**, not, as at 1080 and 1980, **thonk**). For the b-verse, cf. 645; the precise force of the expression in the present context is not quite clear; A&W suggest ‘beyond all your other kindnesses’.
- 1081 achieved:** for the application of the verb to the achieving, or bringing to a successful conclusion, of a chivalric exploit, cf. Chaucer, *Legend of Good Women* 1614 (‘this aventure acheve’), 2111; *Lancelot do Lac* 256 (‘sa queste qu’il a achevee’); First Continuation 12679–80 (‘Li rois avoit achievé L’oirre que il avoit empris’), 13597.
- 1084** The provision of female company (cf. 1098–9) and access to the womenfolk formed a point of the etiquette of hospitality: cf. *Laud Troy Book*, where Medea is sent for to ‘comen adoun To glade his gestes of gret renoun’ and ‘bede ... go and sitte ... His vncouth gest Iason besyde’ (589–602).
- 1086–7** The lord’s gaiety is characterized as extreme, but this would not have been considered out of place in a host: see n. to **981–90**.
- 1086 let ... lotes:** the alliterative phrase – derived from ON *lâta lâtum* [make a noise] – also occurs in another northern poem, *Cursor* (MS C), where it refers at 12496 to wailing; since *lote* certainly covers non-verbal as well as verbal sounds (see *lot(e)* 3(a) and (b) in *MED*), it might in *Sir Gawain* indicate cries and guffaws as well as or rather than words. *MED*, again unnecessarily (cf. n. to 1069, 1073), assigns a special entry to **lotes** here and at 988 and 1954 (‘merry words, jests’); it is other words in these lines that denote merriment or jesting, **lotes** itself simply referring to the ‘sounds’, ‘cries’ and ‘words’ covered in *lot(e)* 3(a) and (b).
- 1087** The verb **wolde** is idiomatic in such contexts – cf. *Song of Roland* 721 (‘As they wold out of wit, they wept that tid’), *Ywain and Gawain* 2632, *William* 1509, *Sir Eglamour* L 1146. For **ne wüst what he myghte**, cf. *Sir Tristrem* 414–18: ‘He [Tristrem, set ashore with some food by his kidnappers] no wist what he mought, But semly sett him doun, And ete til him gode thought ... The forest forth he sought.’ The sense in *Sir Tristrem* is plainly ‘he did not know what best to do’, ‘he had formed no plan of action’; in *Sir Gawain*, the implication is presumably that the

lord's behaviour resembled that of a man whose actions were not thought through in advance, i.e. it was erratic and impulsive.

1089 Cf. 'For als thay demden to doo thay deden full even' (P3A T 367).

1090 **holde this hest**: the collocation – cf. C 1636 (and CT V.1064: 'Holdeth youre heste') – marks a theme central to *Sir Gawain*, and the host's apparently jovial insistence on the language of promise, contract and troth-plight (1105, **forward**; 1108, **sware with trauthe**; 1112, **bargayn**; 1123, **covenauntes**) recalls a similar emphasis by the Green Knight (378, 393, 394) and thus indicates the narrative parallel between these two occasions on which Gawain pledges his truth to the terms of what is on both occasions represented as a 'game'.

1092 Walewein makes a similar response to his host's suggestion he should take the latter's place at table beside his wife: 'You are my host: what you command I will do at once' (*Walewein* 2562–3). In both texts, the implication is that the men would demur at the favour shown, but must accept it.

1093–7 The verb 'travel' (1093; cf. 2241) had not yet acquired a form distinct from that of 'travail' [labour], and the close connection between the two senses of the verb is central to the host's logic here: Gawain's long journey, coupled with subsequent late nights, has left him, the host claims, too run down for any game which would require much expenditure of energy from him. He has, of course, his own reasons for exaggerating his guest's exhaustion (since Gawain has enjoyed three days of lavish **sustnaunce** and should be no more prevented from early-morning hunting by having **waked** with his host than is the host himself), but his adjurations to his guest to sleep late can represent themselves as hostile: it is plain from *Walewein* 11020–27 that a host might well be surprised and concerned if an honoured guest rose, like the household and its lord, at daybreak.

1096 Cf. 1676.

1097 **Masse-while** (and the similar expression 'mes-tyme' in *Alphabet of Tales* 205) implies that Mass occurred at set times in the daily routine of an household, though other Masses might also be said: Gawain does hear Mass (presumably at the **Masse-while**) over the following days (1311, 1558, 1876), but Bertilak also hears an earlier one (1135, 1414, 1690), perhaps provided especially (since he will be in the field at the time of the regular one).

1097–1101 The host's test of Gawain's behaviour with his wife can be arranged under colour of the conventions of courtesy, which dictated that a host should make the company of the females of the household unconditionally and unsuspectingly available to his

guest (see n. to 1084).

- 1099 **comfort yow with compayny**: cf. 1011, where the words are likewise applied to the enjoyment gained in each other's society by Gawain and the lady. The collocation is one of the more richly expressive of those recurrent within this particular narrative (as opposed to those that recur across different poems).
- 1100, 1102 **lende** often implies rest as opposed to motion (cf. 'The herte restes and stille lendes': *Sidrak* B 3073) and it occurs in the sense of 'stay' in the same rhyming antithesis with **wende** [go] in the alliterative *John Evangelist Hymn* 79–80 and *York Plays* XXIV.202–4. **huntyng** on holy days was something apparently requiring confession and penance (Danziger and Gillingham 2003: 133). It is presumably a mark of the propriety of this household that no hunting has been undertaken for the amusement of the house party during the three days following Christmas Day over which their stay is extended, for those days were major feast days which laymen were required to observe (see n. to 1021–2). The next day, 29 December, is treated by the host as his first opportunity to engage in that favourite recreation of gentlefolk.
- 1105–7 Other medieval romances (e.g. Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale*) also turn on the binding obligation to keep a promise or agreement. The plot of *Sir Amadace*, in particular, features a *forward* (490, 738) and *covenant* (731) – cf. *G* 1105, 1123 – of a comparable nature, the white knight requiring from Amadace a pledge that he will 'share' with him all that he 'gains': 'Butte a forwart make I with the or that thou goe, That evyn to part betwene us toe The godus thou hase wonun and spedde' (490–92). The hero is subsequently required to be ready to cut his wife and child in two (though, like Abraham, he is spared actually having to do so), she herself asserting that his 'covandus' must at all costs be 'holdun' (731).
- 1107 **what chek so ye acheve**: cf. *MA* 1539, *Rowlande and Ottuell* 851, *WA* 3225 ('And cheued him of cheualry chekis out of nombre'). The phrase is equivalent to French *eschec gaaigner/conquerre*: 'si pristrent tout l'eschec qu'il avoit conquis' [they possessed themselves of all the *eschec* they had gained through victory] (*Livre d'Artus* 32), 'Grans fu l'esqués qui gaaigniés fu' (*Moniage* 3920; cf. 4559, 5428, 6189); see also *Chanson de Roland* 2478. The basic sense of French *eschec* is 'booty, prize, what is gained by chivalric effort or battle' (the term being usable by extension, in French and English, of a battle itself: cf. *C* 1238), and the context here in *Sir Gawain* suggests this stricter French usage rather than the looser sense ('chance, fortune') which the

word regularly had in English (see 1857 and 2195). The host is choosing language that suits his guest's profession as a knight, and drawing a parallel and distinction between his own *winnings* in the **wode** [hunting ground: 1106] and the metaphorical **chek** Gawain might **acheve** through chivalric prowess. Parallels – serious or witty – between the two activities were common. An elaborate example occurs in *Ipomedon*, where wordplay constantly conflates the hunts the hero pretends to engage in with the tournaments he is in fact fighting (see p. 241).

- 1108 This is the only occurrence in ME of *swap* (literally 'strike') meaning 'exchange', a sense not otherwise recorded by *OED* until 1594; that meaning emerged out of the expression 'swap a bargain' (i.e. strike hands together to confirm a bargain), for which the first citation is 1590; the expression here perhaps involves the original meaning of *swap* [strike] in some expression reduced from 'swap we our handes so'. Some word(s) have possibly been lost. Since **Swete** as a substantive used vocatively is a form of address usually bestowed on a sweetheart, one would expect it, in address from one man to another, to be used adjectivally: cf. the Green Knight's (slightly ironic) **sir swete** at 2237.
- 1112 For indefinite **Who** forming the equivalent of an 'if' clause followed by passive verb, see 355 ('who laytes the sothe' [if the truth be sought]) and cf. *Pe* 709. The exophoric **this** in **this beverage** indicates that the host is appealing to a cultural norm (sealing contracts by drinking on them) which he shares with those who, whether inside or outside the text, constitute his audience. Cf. *Beryn* 359 ('Anoon thay dronk the beverage and were of oon accord'); see also Green 1999: 58, 121–2, 293, 406n., 407n. For the collocation with **bargayn** in alliterative verse, cf. *PP* B.5.338 ('Bargaynes and beverages bigonne to arise'). *Bargayn* was often a quasi-legal term (= contract: *MED* *bargain*(e 1(a))), and the practice of sealing it with drink was especially associated with commercial contracts; see e.g. the entries in *MED* sv *beverage* (b). Mercantile terminology (*chevisaunce*, *chepe*, *porchas*, *chaffer*) is likewise later used by both men to characterize their gains of the day as the goods or purchases acquired by mercantile skills in dealing and bargaining (cf. 1123, 1390–94, 1406, 1646–7, 1678, 1938–41; and see further Blanch and Wasserman 1984, Mann 1986). The status they would enjoy in commercial law is thereby conferred (though apparently in jest) upon the 'goods' each man thus contractually 'owes' the other.
- 1113 the lord of that lede is one of the alliterative formulations that characterize Bertilak as the leader of a community (cf. 833, 849,

1124) and so ensure that he cuts a rather more authoritative and less sycophantic figure than the equivalent generous hosts often do in episodes of hospitality in chivalric romance.

- 1114 *dronken and daylyeden and dalten untyghtel***: cf. ***dronken and dalten*** at 1668, where the context is similar and where ***dalten*** seems to mean ‘spoke, conversed’ and to represent a reduction of such expressions as ‘dele dom/wordes/langage’ (cf. C 344). ME *tuhtle* meant ‘custom, good custom’, and *untuhtle* always elsewhere carries the sense ‘wrongful or improper action’, but is here evidently used in a weakened sense, perhaps ‘trifling or unserious matter’. ***dalten untyghtel*** thus refers to agreeably unweighty talk, the conversational ***trifles ful hende*** engaged in by Arthur at 108.
- 1116 *frenkysch fare*** occurs elsewhere as a sarcastic concessive (‘for all your/his Frankish fare’): see *Gospel of Nicodemus* 1294; cf. *Chester Plays* 3.100, *John the Reeve* 826, Minot 6/20. Though it implies arrogance and airs and graces, nothing characterizable in that way occurs in any of these texts, where the phrase is used without much precision simply to register sarcasm, defiance of a command or claim, or antagonistic posture. The *Gawain* poet may be using a non-hostile sense of which no other examples survive, or he may simply be reinventing the phrase in defiant disregard of the jeer it usually constituted. It is certainly not the only occasion on which details of aristocratic luxury and sophistication recorded elsewhere in a derogatory manner figure in *Sir Gawain* in a commendatory fashion (see e.g. n. to 801–2).
- 1117 *stemed*** appears (*pace* T&G) to be a different verb from the one that figures at 230 (on which see n.), where *stem* is *MED stemmen* v¹, ‘consider’, whereas here (as at C 905) the verb is plainly *stemmen* v², ‘pause (especially from speech), halt’, as the collocation with *still* confirms: e.g. ‘Speke we wald, might had we nan, For-thi we stemmed still als stan’ (*Cursor* C 24326–7; cf. *York Plays* XLV.98). The collocation here nicely captures that socially transitional moment in which, after the livelier talk and laughter of the evening (1113–15), the party rises to its feet, pauses and resumes speech with lowered energy output, prior to dispersal (1118).
- 1119 *lede*** [man] has here the sense ‘servant’ (as at 851) – the provision of attendants with torches or candles to light the way to the sleeping chamber being one of the luxuries which Gawain regularly enjoys at Hautdesert (cf. 1685, 1989), but which were not available to him when he travelled ***ledeles*** through the comfortless outdoor world (693). ***lyght*** is, in context, almost a pun. It primarily denotes the hospitably glad and ‘cheerful’

readiness (cf. *MED light* adj¹ 6) with which the service is performed. But the collocation with **lemande** inevitably suggests the noun or adjective *light* = ‘bright(ness)’, for this was a standard pairing in alliterative metre (cf. 2010; *C* 1486; *Pe* 119, 1043) – the predictable sense interacting with the actual one to support the correlation (between human cheerfulness and material brightness) which the alliteration itself creates.

1123 Recorded coveauntes: the verb occurs as a gloss for French *reherce* (*MED recorden* 6) and, in collocation with *covenant*, was used of the formal reiteration of terms, in speech or writing, of business transactions. Like the **beverage** that seals the **bargayn** (1112), the expression thus alludes to the procedures (developed largely in mercantile contexts) that formalized contracts. Cf. ‘it is ordeyned ... that the contractes and the coveauntes of that merchaundise ben rehersed and recorded aforne the ballyves ... And thanne ... entered in the rolle of the ballives’ (*Black Book of the Admiralty* II.119). The phrase is the equivalent of ‘Refourme we our forwardes’ at 378, the bob-and-wheel giving, through the foregrounding and pairing of the nouns **coveauntes** and **layk**, summary emphasis to the two aspects under which the agreement has figured, legal and ludic (cf. 1105, 1111, 1112 and n. to 1090).

1126 The new fitt (see n. to **491**) is marked by a six-line-deep decorated initial F.

1127–8 gromes are often mentioned in connection with horses (an association which has survived into ModE): see the citations in *MED* sv *grom* 2(a). **busken up** is glossed ‘hasten’ in *MED*, which however cites no parallels for the usage. Haste is certainly but adequately conveyed by **bylive**, and – since the verb is often used with directional adverbs and adverbial phrases (e.g. ‘busk of/to bed’: cf. 1411 and *C* 834) – as at 1136, 1448, 2476 and *StE* 112 (‘buskyd thiderwarde’) – ‘arise, rise up (in response to the summons of their masters)’ seems a preferable gloss here.

1130, 1134 to ride all arayed ... Arayed for the rydyng: i.e. prepared for a long, fast or important ride; cf. ‘[Alexander] Arayed hym for to ryde’ (*P3A* 346), ‘Araye the ... to ride and to renne’ (*Lament* 81).

1133 was not the laste: the lord gets up, like the guests, before dawn (1126, 1137), for hunting is always assumed to involve an early start (‘au point du jour’: *Livre d’Artus* 164; ‘atte the white off the day’: *Tretyse off Huntyng* 45). For the phrasing in the context of early rising, the influential romances of Hue de Rotelande offer a parallel: cf. ‘Levez est Latins ... Ben vus dis, n’est pas li dereins’ (*Protheselaus* 9629–30), and *Ipomedon* 5621 and 3545–6 (where

the hero, pretending to go hunting, is mockingly represented by the onlookers as ensuring that he will get to the tournament on time: see n. to 1107): ‘Est ja vers le turnei meü, ne voilt pas estre le derain.’

- 1135 A sop was often taken in place of a meal when time was pressing (as when Cador ‘Tase a sope in the tour and taryez no langer’ at *MA* 1890), or, as here, to see one through vigorous activity when the preparation of dinner proper (the first meal of the day) cannot be waited for, as before a battle at *Livre d’Artus* 55 (‘Si mengerent de telx i ot une soupe en vin por lor cuers tenir’). The poet is careful to specify that the lord first hears **Masse** – which is not the regular daily Mass which Gawain hears when he rises (1311), but an earlier and probably abbreviated one (a *missa venatoria* said ‘for hunters in a hurry’: Bennett, citing Fortescue 1912: 192; cf. the hunters’ Mass at *Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle* 27–9).
- 1136 **bent** (a type of grass) was a poeticism for ‘field’ in hunting and military contexts and bugles and/or horns were a prominent part of both activities. The poet, by concentrating on features and terminology shared by hunting and battle, presents in the hunting host a more traditionally heroic model of outdoor knighthood to complement the feats of indoor courtesy performed by Gawain. See p. 247.
- 1137 **daylyght lemed**: cf. 1180. The different contexts in which the same collocation occurs emphasize the more leisurely and upholstered nature of time and space for Gawain, and the different start times that mark the contrasting activities of the two knights.
- 1138 ‘High horses/steeds’ (cf. *Mum and the Sothsegger* 921; *P3A* 111, 170; *Guy of Warwick* 1201) implied fine horses (as those used for hunting would be) and the phrase is an implicit class indicator: cf. ‘The kyng of heven ... come neyther on hegh hors ... bot mekely rydyng on a sympul asse bak’ (*Mirk* 227).
- 1139ff Hunts frequently figure in romance, though only *P3A* – which opens with a deer stalking and includes a description (by Youth) of hawking – can compare with *Sir Gawain* in the length and vividly elaborate detail of its hunting episodes. On the poet’s probable debt to *Ipomedon* in particular, and for the three categories of game represented in the hunts in *Sir Gawain*, see p. 241.
- 1139 Cf. ‘The hunter ... Vncoupult kennettis [small dogs] as he couthe’ (*Avowing* 85). **cacheres** (glossed ‘huntsmen’ by editors and *MED*) may refer specifically to dog handlers, as *catcher* in the sense of ‘hunter’ is not otherwise recorded, whereas *cacheken*

(= one responsible for hunting dogs) is (see *MED* sv *cacchen* v 7 and sv *chace-cien*): he is an official distinguished from the *veutrer* mentioned in 1146 (the master of the greyhounds), and *cacher/cacheken* (= driver or handler of dogs) bears an intelligible relation to *Promptorium* 57, which glosses *cacher* as *minator*, *abactor* [cattle-driver].

- 1141 **bare thre motes** (MS *pre bare mote*): the emendation is indicated by metre (which requires a long dip in the b-verse) and by the parallel construction (**bare** + *numeral*) at 1066 ('bare three dayes') and C 1573 ('Out-taken bare two'), where **bare** means 'no more than, exactly'; cf. 'Receyved of alle our Bretheren of our Crafte ... barely ccliij. vj. s. x d.' (*Grocers Company* 272). A *mote* is a horn call. A call of exactly three **motes** (three single notes) was normally the signal to unleash the dogs (cf. 'The mayster hunte ... blew thre mot At the uncouplynge of hys houndes': Chaucer, *Book of the Duchess* 375–7); but this cannot be the point here, since the dogs have only just been leashed and are uncoupled at 1147. The call seems here to announce the departure to the hunting ground ('We're off!'); cf. 'He & all his men sett hornes to mouth & blew thre motes, that the quene & all the ladies might here, that he went on hunting' (*Ipomedon* C 337).
- 1143–4 **on chasyng that wenten** probably distinguishes the men or dogs that were to drive or chase the deer from the archers and those who (see 1146) are to wait at the receiving stations to which the animals will be driven. The half line is interpreted as a reference to the dogs (and as the grammatical object of the verbs **chastysed and charred**) by A&W and T&G, where it is glossed 'the hounds that strayed away on other scents'. But there is no evidence that **on chasyng** could bear this sense. Conversely, **A hundred of hunteres**, which they assume to refer to the huntsmen and to be the grammatical subject of the verbs in the previous line, in fact refers to the dogs; though *hunter* is not elsewhere used with reference to dogs in ME (as T&G point out), it occurs with that application in early ModE, and is clearly indicated here by grammar (*charren* = 'drive' and *chastise* are transitive verbs), by the reference at 1597 to 'A hundred houndes', and by probability: accounts from the period show that the grandest households maintained some hundred running hounds, but only some twenty huntsmen (Cummins 1988: 21, 174).
- 1146 The line indicates that the hunt is a deer drive rather than the pursuit of a single deer (only allowed in spring and summer). Participators took up positions at hunting stations or **trysteres**, in order to shoot at the driven deer, which were pursued by small

running hounds; any deer that escaped the archers would be chased back to the hunting area or brought down by the large greyhounds controlled by the **vewters** at the **trysteres**. Cf. *Awntyrs* 35–41 (where Arthur likewise stations men and dogs at *tristes* in preparation for the deer drive with which that alliterative romance begins) and the vivid analogy employed by Pandarus when he promises Troilus to bring Criseyde to his ‘sick-bed’: ‘Lo, hold the at thi triste cloos, and I Shall wel the deer unto thi bowe dryve’ (*Troilus* II.1534–5). For the association of **vewters** and greyhounds with *tristes*, cf. ‘Triste is ther me sit [where one waits] mid te greahunz’ (*Ancrene Wisse* 126), ‘twey fewtreres owyn to make faire logges ... at her trestes for to kepe the kyng and the quene ... and eke the greyhoundes fro the sonne’ (*Master of Game* 108).

- 1147 of kest:** cf. ‘And when he ... is forth ... to the felde goon, And when he has of-cast his cowples at will ...’ (*Boke of St Albans* 25–7). Since it is seen as marking the point at which the hunt gets under way, the uncoupling of the hounds is often mentioned in literary hunts: cf. *Generydes* 42–5 (‘his houndys were oncopelyd by and by’ and all set off ‘with a mery cry’), *Awntyrs* 44 (‘They kest of here couples in cliffes so colde’), *Mum and the Sothsegger* 928, *Protheselaus* 1871, *Ferguut* 83.
- 1149 rurd:** the word recurs with reference to the roaring fortissimo of the hunt (1698, 1916; cf. 1427–8, 1719–24), which contrasts with the hush of Gawain’s bedroom, in which even the slightest suppressed sound, or **little dyn** made **dernely** (1183), can be heard. For **forest** used (like *park* and *wood*) specifically of a hunting arena, cf. ‘whan the kyng wil hunt in foreste or in parke’ (*Master of Game* 107), ‘the Maister of our game of oure fforest and parke of ffekkenham’ (*Coventry Leet Book* 405).
- 1150 For quest** [search, hunt] used specifically of the cry of hunting-dogs (as were the verb and verbal noun *questen* and *questyng*), cf. ‘For hundis queste it semyt the lyft [sky] ryfe [split] wald’ (Douglas, *Aeneid* V.v.26).
- 1151 drof in the dale:** since the deer make for the high ground in order to escape, **in** must here indicate present location rather than direction (which latter would, in any case, more normally be expressed by *drive into*): ‘in the valley, the deer ran’. Collocational habits may have prompted the a-verse: cf. (in the context of a battle) ‘drof hom into a dale’ at *Song of Roland* 1029, and *Mum and the Sothsegger* 924.
- 1152–70 With Hyed to the high** cf. *P3A* 59, where the deer likewise respond to a danger signal by making for the high ground (‘And thay, forfrayede of his fare, to the fellys thay hyen’). For the

counter-goal of the hunters, who drive the deer downhill (1159, 1169) to the tryst below (1170), cf. ‘The wild beistis down to the daill thai dryve. Lo! thar the rais [roes] ... Drevyn from the hychtis’ (Douglas, *Aeneid* IV.iv.48–50).

- 1153 stablye** (which could also be used of a military encampment) and **ascryed** (cf. *C* 1206, 1784) are further words that occur also in military contexts (see n. to **1136**).
- 1154 herttes ... with the highe hedes:** the collocation is common; it occurs in the deer hunt in Douglas’s *Aeneid*, in a passage which, having no equivalent in Virgil, indicates the popularity of the deer hunt in contemporary life and literature (‘The herd of hartis with thar hedis hie’: IV.iv.52), and in the deer stalking that opens *P3A* (‘I seghe ane hert with ane hede, ane heghe for the nones’: 25). The ‘high head’ indicates that the deer is an adult male: the term *hart*, according to Twiti, strictly refers to a red deer old enough to have at least ten tines on its antlers, its ‘fyrst hed’, i.e. over six years old (*C* 36).
- 1155 bukkes ... with her brode paumes:** the poet’s terminology is technically correct: the male fallow deer becomes a *buck* only at six years old; the broad part of its antlers should be called the *palm* (Cummins 1988: 32).
- 1156–7 fermysoun**, a technical term of venery, occurs elsewhere in alliterative verse – at *MA* 180 and at *Awntyrs* 7–8 (‘To fall of the femailes [to strike down the females] ... Fair by the fermison’) – but is otherwise found only in French and Latin. The first citation (from a Foot of Fines) in *OED* sv *fermison* indicates that adult male deer could be hunted only between May and September, that the closed season for males was called *fermison*, and that the females could be hunted only between November and February, their open season thus falling within the winter months of *fermison* when the adult males were protected. The hunters here thus allow the males to escape (1154–5) – further evidence of the model household run by this model lord (cf. 848–9).
- 1157 meve to** means ‘move or proceed against or towards’ (*MED* *meven* 2a(c)), and does not refer to the flushing of the deer (*pace* *MED* and T&G), since (a) *meve* in that sense is transitive and does not occur in the form **meve to**; and (b) discrimination in favour of the males cannot occur in the rousing of the deer by the hounds (which will be necessarily *indiscriminate*), but only in which deer the archers choose to shoot at.
- 1158b** The MS reads ‘with hay & war’, which yields a b-verse without a long dip. We have emended in the light of 1445, though there are other possibilities (e.g. ‘with “Hay!” and with “Ware!” ’).
- 1160 slypped:** for the application to arrows, cf. ‘[He] lete his Arow

Slippe' (Lydgate, *Siege of Thebes* 1277). The verbal noun **slentyng** occurs only here, but *slenten* was regularly used of a blow with a weapon (= to strike at) and of the glancing stroke of a weapon so aimed (= to fall (on)) and occurs with reference to missiles at *Sir Ferumbras* 3313 ('Gret slabbes of styl & yre to the walles tho wern y-slente [cast]'). **slentyng of arwes** [arrow shot] similarly concerns a weapon propelled, a blow aimed.

- 1161 **wapped** (of obscure origin) is used of wind at 2004, and likewise occurs with reference to arrows – 'quarrels' which 'quappid thurghe mayles' – at WA 2353.
- 1162 **bote** (cf. 426): the verb is regularly used of blades, arrowheads, etc. For **bigly** = 'firmly', see Pa 321, SJ 618, DT 7526. **with ful brode hedes**: the phrase 'With arwes brode' occurs in other hunting scenes (see CA 5.1266, CT VII.2258); hunting arrows had triangular heads with long, heavy barbs (Danziger and Gillingham 2003: 131).
- 1164–73 The pursuing **raches** of 1164 are the dogs introduced as **Braches** at 1142: cf. 'a brache, *vel* [or] a rache' (*Anglo-Saxon Vocabularies* 618). They are running dogs which drive the deer, as distinct from the **grehoundes** at the trysts which bring the game down. The two sorts of dogs (and their distinct roles) are often referred to – cf. 'Sexty grewhondes unto the gamen And sexti raches rynnande in samen' (*Sege of Melayne* 851–2; cf. *Carl of Carlisle* 61–4) – and both figure in the deer drive in *Awntyrs* 58–60.
- 1166 Cf. 2201 and Douglas, *Aeneid* V.v.26 ('For hundis queste it semyt the lyft [sky] ryfe [split] wald').
- 1167–8 (cf. 1321–2, 1381–2). Since deer have neither the ferocity of the boar nor the wiliness of the fox, the main achievement of the deer drive lies in the sheer numbers of animals slain. Success is similarly measured elsewhere – five hundred deer have been killed by prime (see n. to 1675) in *Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle* (112–13). This would have special point in winter, when no other fresh meat was to be had.
- 1167 **atwaped**: found only here and in *Cleanness* (see n. to C 1205–11).
- 1168 MS **to** presumably represents the intensifying prefix *to-* that is common with verbs of destruction (cf. **to-fylched** at 1172) and has here been assumed as applying to both **-raced** and **-rent**; for *to-rend* see C 368, Pa 96, Pe 1136. Both verbs are normally found with reference to persons. **resayte** in the b-verse is much the earliest instance of the word *receipt* in its special hunting application to a 'receiving place' or *tryst*: see MED *receit* 3(e) (where *Sir Gawain* provides the only entry) and OED *receipt* 14

(where the first recorded occurrence is dated 1575).

- 1169 The deer are ‘teased’ (**taysed**) by hounds towards the greyhounds; cf. ‘The mayster of game ... oweth to sette the greihound and ho so be *tesours* ... As oft as any hert commeth, he schal ... lette hem after to teise it forth’ (*Master of Game* 107).
- 1172 **to-fylched**: likewise used of a dog’s attack in a sermon for the feast of Peter and Paul: ‘so frek [fierce] was that uncely hounde, that he him filchid felli thare’ (*Altenglische Legenden* 79).
- 1174 **abloy** occurs only here. Wright 1923 suggested it could represent an AN variant of OF *esbloi* (past participle of *esbloir* [darken]) in an extension of its sense of *aveuglé* [blinded, dazzled] into ‘transported, reckless’. But AN *abloir* is attested only in the sense ‘make blue, discolour’.
- 1178 Concatenation on summarizing **Thus** (1177–8) marks the transition from field to bedroom. **lyndewodes** is a reversal for metrical purposes of *wodelinde* (*MED* *lind*(e 4(b) and 4(c)), a compound often associated with deer: cf. ‘To chase the herte and the hynde, And to pley under the wode lynde’ (*Guy of Warwick* C 1205–6). **-wodes eves** (cf. *Merlin* 386, *MA* 1283) is the equivalent of similar references in French to the less dense ‘oraille [edge] de la forest’, the English word occurring as a gloss for the French one in Walter de Bibbesworth 551: ‘hourail: *wode hevese*’.
- 1180 **Lurkkes**: the verb is used in this oeuvre with reference to being or moving under some kind of cover (cf. 1195, *Pe* 978, *Pa* 277) and does not necessarily imply the surreptitious skulking with which it is often associated elsewhere and in later usages. **daylyght lemed**: see n. to 1137.
- 1182 **as in slomeryng he slode**: the collocation of *slide* with *sleep*/*slumber* is common, but the reference elsewhere is always to falling or sinking *into* sleep: cf. *Pe* 59; *Pa* 200; *DT* 6; Douglas, *Aeneid* VII.Prol.111, VIII.Prol.3 (‘I slaid on a swevenyng, slummyrrand a lite’). It is likely that, here as elsewhere (cf. n. to 1151), the wording has been influenced by collocational habits, the verb being the one that would suggest itself as combinable with *slumber* and *sly* (cf. ‘Then slade [the god] slily away, & [Alexander] fra slepe ryse’: *WA* 2996), but pushed into a new meaning of ‘slide or drift along (in sleep)’.
- 1183 **dernely**: MS *derfly* yields a b-verse with no long dip, and so presumably represents what the scribe read as *deruely*, but which may have been *dernely*, since the two words would have been indistinguishable (cf. n. to 1047). The fact that **dernely** occurs in collocation with **dor** only five lines later (at 1188) could be used as an argument for or against assuming the same collocation at 1183. A case could be made for *dervely*: the word does occur in

collocation with **dyn** at C 862, and it could here have the sense ‘promptly’ (cf. C 632, WA 2006). But the contextual emphases on quietness and surreptitiousness favour **dernely**. As to the medial *e* required by metre, the situation is complicated: the adverb *dermly* (< OE *derne* + *lice*) could certainly have medial *e* (cf. *dærneli* at *Ormulum* 8476), although this is never elsewhere reflected in MS spelling; conversely, *derfly* (< ON *djarfliga*) twice appears spelled *deruely* (2334, C 632), though the medial *e* is not historical. On the contrast between **little dyn** and **rurd**, see n. to 1149.

- 1186 waytes warly thiderwarde:** in the sense ‘so as to avoid detection’, *wareli* is elsewhere (with the verb ‘espy’) likewise used of watching: *MED wareli adv* (e).
- 1187 on lyve:** not in the MS, but supplied to regularize a metrically deficient line in a manner consistent with the poet’s alliterative habits. *Ladies* almost invariably prompts a collocational *life* of some sort elsewhere in this MS (cf. 1229, *Pe* 774), and both words occur with *lovely* at *G* 52 (‘And the lovelokkest ladies that ever lif haden’). The association between the two words prompts the tag ‘(up)on life’ [alive, in being] at 2054, where it plainly has much weakened sense (cf. 1717, 1719). Its use here would be not inapt: *alive* is common with superlatives (cf. ‘Ich shal yeue the to wive The fairest thing that is olive’ at *Havelok* 2865–6, and see further *MED alive* 2(a)), and its presence would underline the superlative force of **loveliest**, recalling the emphatic superlative used to introduce the lady, ‘the fayrest ... of all other’, her loveliness surpassing even the legendary beauty of Guinevere (943–5).
- 1190** Ipomedon likewise feigns sleep when the infatuated Ismeine creeps to his bed in the night: ‘Estrangement s’en esmerveille, En pes se jut, si fist dorveille [= *dormeveille*]’ [he marvelled very much (cf. *G* 1197); he lay still and pretended to be asleep] (8827–8); see p. 241 and n. to 1133 above. **let as** [behave as if] is an ON-derived expression; for **let as he slepte** = ‘pretended to be asleep’, cf. ‘In bedde ful still sco lai, Lett als sco slep’ (*Cursor* C 8613–4) and *Alphabet of Tales* 167.
- 1195a** MS ‘*þe lede lay lurked*’ is syntactically anomalous and metrically irregular, the simplest solution to both problems being the insertion of ‘and’; cf. ‘a ryuoure ... in the which lay and lurkyd an edder or a dragon’ (*Speculum Sacerdotale* 130).
- 1196–7** Since *u* and *n* are indistinguishable in the MS, **Mene** in 1197 could be *meve* and the word has been so read by other editors. But for the collocation of *compass* and *mene*, cf. ‘Priamus ... in hymselfe gan for to compasse Ful prudently what it myghte mene’

(Lydgate, *Troy Book* 4.828–9), and for the alliterative collocation of *mene* and *marvel*, cf. *G* 233. **to** in 1196b (picked up in 1197b in **to mervayl**) is slightly puzzling, as neither *meve to* nor *mene to* is recorded with any signification that would give good sense here, and **to** should perhaps be construed only with **amount**, which certainly does occur with *to* (cf. *Pa* 332, *StE* 160). For **case** = ‘action/deed’, see *MED cas* 4.

- 1201 unlouked his iye-lyddes** is usually glossed ‘opened his eyes’. But Gawain has already feigned waking up (1200a) and his eyes must therefore be already open. What he is doing is opening his eyes wider in order to express surprise (**and let as him wondered**). Cf. *Canterbury Interlude*, where the Pardoner, chatting up a pretty barmaid, dilates his eyes in order to look her, with suggestive pointedness, full in the face: ‘And pryvelich unlased his both eyen-liddes And loked her in the visage paramour amyddes, And sighed therwith a litel tyme ...’ (67–9). In both scenes, the men open their (already open) eyes wider in order to express something to their interlocutors: sexual interest in the Pardoner’s case, surprise in Gawain’s.
- 1202** The cross had talismanic power to ward off evil (see e.g. *PP* B.18.432–3, *Lancelot* III, 191), and crossing oneself was thus a response to the presence of danger; cf. ‘Hi seinde hem daer te deser noet’ [facing such danger, he crossed himself] (*Lancelot* 648). It is presumably the moral danger the lady represents that Gawain is crossing himself against, much as Ygerne crosses herself when told of the king’s love for her: ‘ele lieve sa main si se saine & dist: “Diex, comme li rois est traitres qu’il fait samblant de mon signor amer & moi & lui veut honir” ’ [she raises her hand and crosses herself, and says: ‘Lord, what a traitor is the king, who feigns friendship for my husband and wishes to bring disgrace on him and me’] (Vulgate *Merlin* 60). But Gawain can make the gesture look as if it were simply the one commonly used on awakening (cf. ‘Aryse be tyme out of thi bedde, And blysse thi brest and thi forhede’: *Young Children’s Book* 11–12).
- 1204–7** The tags in the wheel typify the lady as the archetypally attractive one. ‘Chin and cheek’ (cf. *CA* 7.1892) could be used with reference to female charms (cf. ‘Lufflye of chynne and cheke’: *Ipomadon* 2374); with **white and red in blande**, cf. ‘Her visage fressh and wele colowred, so entermedled white and rede so naturally’ (*Merlin* 227); and the ideal mouth was obviously a **smal** rosebud – like that of Chaucer’s Prioress (‘Hir mouth ful smal and therto softe and reed’: *CT* I.153) and the lovely portress of *Romaunt of the Rose* (‘With litel mouth and round to see’: 549).
- 1208 gay**: MS *fayr* is unmetrical. All editors except Vantuono emend

to **gay**, which is the word repeatedly used when an alliterative link between Gawain and the lady is required: see 1213 and 1248, as well as 970 and 1003 (and note also 1822).

- 1209 **a sleper unslye, that man may slyde hider**: the reasoning is military (Stokes 1981). A prudent army would always appoint watchmen to ensure that they should not be surprised while asleep ('qu'il ne fussent souspris en dormant': Vulgate *Merlin* 383), a principle seen as operating even in the animal world: a male deer in *P3A* keeps watch for a great stag when the latter sleeps, 'That none so *sleghe* in his *slepe* with *sleghte* sholde him dere' (36). For other instances of collocation between, variously, *sly*, *slide* and *sleep*, see WA 2996 and DT 788, 2377, 8224.
- 1210 A&W translate **Bot true us may schape** as 'Unless we can arrange a truce between ourselves', but omission of the subject pronoun is unlikely in this context. *MED* assumes the same sense as at 2328 and includes both instances under *shapen* 7(a) ('direct, prescribe'). But the present instance probably belongs under *MED shapen* 4(e) ('happen, occur') and has the same sense ('be brought about, come about') as at *Pa* 160 ('And all to lyghten that lome, if lethe wolde schape').
- 1216 **bos**: we have assumed MS *byhoue3* (which yields an unmetrical b-verse with two long dips) to be a scribal normalization of the contracted form (used *metri causa* at *Pe* 323).
- 1217 **mony a blythe laghter**: *laughter* is often the equivalent of *ModE* 'laugh' (which did not exist as a noun at this period) and occurs as a count noun also in *MA* 2673 ('With lowde laghttirs') and *DT* 5053 ('a laughter').
- 1219 **deprece** must here have a sense opposite to **depressed** at 6 and 1770 ('oppressed, pressed hard') and **depres** at *Pe* 778, and may well be a scribal error. The normal verb in French for 'relaxing' custody of a prisoner was *disprisoner*, for which both *disprison* and *unprison* are recorded as English equivalents; a single instance of an apparently nonce-formed *despriser* [un-take, release from prison] does figure in Godefroy's *Dictionnaire*, but *MED*'s suggestion that **deprece** is an English coinage from a verb that had no currency in French is improbable and would not explain the spelling.
- 1222 **beau sir**: for the ironic or slightly facetious note often struck by this mode of address, see *MED beau* 2(b) and for OF examples, see Ménard 1969: 701.
- 1223–4 For **happe** as being equally applicable to clothes and to bedclothes (and thus here presenting the latter as an alternative to the clothing Gawain had suggested at 1220), cf. 'he has nouthur on bac nor bedd Clath to hap him' (*Cursor G* 6801–2).

‘Wrapping’ by definition involves covering both ‘sides’; for the consequent collocation between **happe** and **half**, cf. *Pa* 450. Though **riche** and **happe** (cf. 1873, 864) represent the bedclothes as ‘array’, **happe** in its sense of ‘fasten, tie’ is also relevant: the lady is keeping her ‘prisoner’, contrary to his request (1219), in his ‘bound’ state.

1235 I schal ware my while wel: for *waren* [spend, lay out] as used of wits (cf. 402) and time (cf. ‘Yche wegh, as he will, warys his tyme’: *DT* 19), see *MED waren* (2)b.

1237–8 Ye are welcom to my corse means simply ‘You are welcome to me’, an expression commonly used to a guest (see *MED welcom(e)* 1a(a)). ‘You are welcome to my body’ (an interpretation based on the strict sense of **corse** [body]) is not possible even as a secondary sense that makes the expression ‘purposely ambiguous’ (Bennett), since in ME (as is pointed out in T&G), *you are welcome to* + noun was used only in the strict sense (‘well come’), never in the ModE sense of ‘I give you permission to make free with x’. The ModE sense arises only when the adjective takes an infinitive, as here with **Ye are welcom ... Your owen won to wale** (= you are free to do as you will: cf. 814 and *Pe* 399). The fact that **welcom** is here used in both constructions (with noun and with infinitive complement) in both senses (‘You are well come to me and welcome to do as you will’) does perhaps force some conflation of the two usages that makes 1237 suggestive. But the suggestiveness is more a matter of context than semantic ambiguity: though very close to the words uttered to his guest by her lord at 835 (‘Ye are welcom to welde as yow likes’), the expression has one effect when uttered by a man to a male guest in a public hall, and quite another when uttered by a woman who has crept into that guest’s bedroom and has there struck up a distinctly arch tone and posture, in which circumstances the graciousness of the hostess must necessarily come over as something of a fig leaf.

1239 In both French and English, **of fyne force** occurs most typically in the context of combat in the sense of ‘by main force’ (see e.g. *Lancelot* III, 348, V, 136; *William* 1217, 4148), but also occasionally, as here, with reference to force of a more abstract kind, in the sense ‘of very necessity’ (cf. *Lancelot* V, 79, *Mum and the Sothsegger* 1636).

1241ff On Gawain’s refusal of the lady’s advances, and its relation to similar incidents elsewhere in romance, see [pp. 242–3](#).

1243 To reche to such reverence: cf. ‘In armes is ther none that to thi renoun reches’ (Mannyng, *Chronicle* II.4845), where the contextual sense of **reche to** [extend as far as: cf. *C* 906] is

likewise ‘be equal to’.

1245b–47 There may be some corruption, since the grammar is puzzling. If **that** in 1246 is relative (‘in words or service which I could devote to you’), then the construction begun in 1245 (‘if it seemed good to you ...’) is left unfinished; if it introduces a clause completing that construction (‘if it were agreeable to you ... that I could **sette**, in words or service ...’), then **sette** lacks an object. A&W translate as if a reflexive pronoun were present (‘that I should devote myself to **your pris**’); Burrow accepts **sette** as intransitive, translating ‘that I could contribute (= make a contribution) to **your pris**’, but there is no evidence of such a sense for intransitive *set*. **your pris** seems to be an elegant coinage of the poet’s own, formed on the model of such polite periphrases for ‘you’ as ‘your high noblesse’, ‘your noble grace’, ‘your fatherhood’, for it does not figure among those listed in *MED* (sv *your* 6b(d)).

1249 The pris and the prowess: cf. 912. In the context of knighthood, *prowess* usually denotes the outdoor skills in combat as opposed to the indoor ones of *courtesy*. But the lady is probably using the word in its wider sense (based on Latin *probitas*) of ‘probity, excellence’ (*MED prouesse* 2(b)).

1250 daynte: the word – which as a plural noun designates refinements of cuisine (998) – is used in a social sense to refer to graces of speech (cf. Gawain’s **daynte wordes** at 1253) and to verbal politeness (cf. 1266, 1662); for the negative (**little daynte**) used to designate want of polite respect and complimentary expressions, cf. ‘“Haile, modi qwene of Messidoyn!” he maistirlike said. Thare deynd him na daynte “madame” hire to call’ (WA 228–9).

1252 Have thee ... in ... holde: the lady continues her conceit of Gawain as her prisoner, to which this expression, when applied to persons, always refers: cf. the reference to Daniel (a Jewish prisoner of war) as a man Balthazar ‘has ... in ... hold’ (C 1597) and *William* 3690 (‘ye han now on [someone] in hold’).

1253–4 for [because of] has been supplied in 1253. *MED* interprets the MS line as ‘with whom to *dally* your dainty words’, treating *dally words* as a nonce transitive usage of *dally* with the nonce sense ‘exchange pleasantries, chat’. But, especially since the b-verse as it stands is unmetrical (lacking a long dip), it is likely that a preposition has dropped. **daly** is not in itself a compromising word. It often meant simply ‘converse, commune’. But skill in *dalliaunce* [elegant and gracious talk] was an attribute of the ideal courtly lover. The lady is thus referring to a skill seen as a romantic and attractive one, and indeed the vocabulary of

1254 (which would normally suggest love-longing) tips the pleasure it imparts just short of explicitly in that direction – especially since it is specifically **ladies** (1251) that she represents as likely to prize an opportunity of hearing Gawain *dallying*.

1255 gat that: the MS reads *þat þat*. The first *that* is commonly omitted by editors, but this still leaves an unmetrical b-verse with weak sense. Our emendation assumes the lady is continuing her image of Gawain as a captured prisoner (cf. **in her holde** at 1252): he is a prisoner more valuable than the **garysoun or gold** also won (**gat**) by military success (*geten* was used of the capture of booty or prizes: *MED geten* 2b(a)). *Geten* is the normal form of the past participle in this MS, but **yat** also occurs (C 66), and, since the poet uses y/g variants for alliterative convenience (cf. **ayain** at 815 and **agayn** at 1638), **gat** is a plausible form, and *gat-yat-þat* constitutes a plausible sequence of scribal errors.

1259 made him ... gret chere: the expression is used especially of the entertainment given by a host or hostess: see *MED chere* n¹ 7(b). The comment is mock naive, but represents the interpretation of his hostess's friendliness that Gawain himself, in his responses to her, finds it politic to express.

1261 skere [clear] regularly had the sense 'blameless, innocent'. Gawain keeps himself 'blamelessly' unresponsive to the lady (by putting a blameless construction on what he represents as her gracious condescension to her guest).

1262 Since *answer* and *case* could both be used in a legal or debating sense, the line suggests the 'refutation' of a 'charge' and thus points to the upside-down debate that is going on here, in which it is compliments rather than insults or accusations that each speaker anxiously turns back on the other (see e.g. **daynte** at 1250, 1266; **pris** at 1247, 1249; **comfort** 1221, 1254; **worschip** at 1227, 1267; **servant** at 1240, 1246, 1278).

1263–7 Cf. "Graunt mercy, fayre damoyzell," he sayth, "For of your grete curtesy, in fayth, Well more than I am worthy ye me prayse" (*Fyftene Joyes of Maryage* 231–3). The notion that giving honour or *worship* is itself honourable ('Qui fet enor, l'anors et soe') is found in the courtly romances of Chrétien de Troyes (*Chevalier de la charrete* 3215–19), and the principle can be invoked, as here, in modest self-depreciation: cf. 'er êrte sich, / der mich geprîset wider dich ... sîn selbes zuht gap im den rât / mêr dan ichz gedienet hân: / er hât ez durch hõfscheit getân' [whoever praised me to you did honour to himself thereby ... his own refinement prompted him to more than I have deserved: he did it through his own courtesy] (*Parzival* 767.11–16).

1266 nis hit: MS *nysen* (or *nyseu*) is usually emended, to *nys even* [is

not commensurate] in T&G, to *nys ever* [is by no means] in A&W; but these suggestions produce unmetrical b-verses (with two long dips). Since we can torture no convincing sense out of *nysen* (clearly and neatly written in the MS), we have settled for an unobtrusive emendation that preserves metre without altering the plain sense of the line.

- 1267 **noght bot wel connes**: Davis (T&G) sees this as a form of the expression ‘can (his, her, etc) good’, with **wel** substituted for *good* for alliterative purposes. But ‘can (one’s) good’ (*MED connen* 6(c)) meant ‘to know what is what (in a practical, prudential or social-moral sense)’, whereas Gawain’s point here is that the honour shown him does *not* proceed from sound assessment of objective worth, but from an honourable incapacity to see or say anything but what is ‘well’.
- 1268 **an other**: obviously a slightly weaker version of *al another* [something else entirely], found in e.g. Layamon 364 (see Bennett and *OED* sv *another* 8).
- 1269 A pointedly feminized expansion of the common phrase *the worldes won*, which can figure in similar expressions: cf. ‘Y nold for al this worldes won Bot y might the traitour slon’ (*Amis and Amiloun* 826–7).
- 1271 **chepen ... to cheve me a lorde**: *chepen* is regularly used in this metaphorical sense (*MED chepen* 2(b) and (c)), though the idiom has again been adapted to the female speaker: it is elsewhere the man rather than the woman who is the buyer of the wares: cf. ‘Til that she fynde som man hir to chepe’ (*CT* III.268), ‘She shall have ynow that woll chepe hir ware’ (Idley II.ii.2990).
- 1272 **costes that I have knowen upon thee**: for **upon** used thus of attributes, cf. ‘For fand mann nan thing upponn hemm Thatt mihhte ohht anngrenn othre’ (*Ormulum* 431–2).
- 1273 Since an unstressed syllable is required at line ending, we have assumed MS *semblaunt* to be an error for **semblaunce**. For the scribal substitution, cf. ‘The bryddes maketh hem goodsemblaunce [var. *semblaunt*]’ (Higden, *Polychronicon* 2.421). Here too the lady is using a logic more often used of than by women: in *Roman de la rose*, *biautez* and *biaus semblanz* are the most deadly first and last of the arrows of Cupid that cause a man to fall in love (1713, 1839).
- 1276 **ye have waled wel better**: the verb often occurs with reference to the choice of a mate (again, usually a wife: cf. nn. to 1269, 1271, 1273): ‘That worthy hade a wyfe walit hymselfen’ (*DT* 105), ‘Quhilk wald ye wail to your wif, gif ye suld wed one?’ (Dunbar, *Twa Mariit Wemen and the Wedo* 530). When Yder is propositioned by his host’s wife, he likewise (though less

obliquely and subtly) points to the superiority of her husband over himself (*Yder* 348–52): he is ten times less worthy than her lord, who outranks him as a king does a *garz* [scullion], and she would be foolish to seek the love of another man who is worth so much less ('D'un autre ke valt meins assez').

1278–9 your knight I becom: knights could make this offer as an expression of obligation and/or devotion to a woman without implying love (cf. 975–6): Lancelot (in love with Guinevere) freely makes it to other women who render him honour or assistance – 'Dame ... ge vos an sai tel gré que je suis vostre chevaliers' (*Lancelot do Lac* 299; cf. *Chevalier de la charrete* 6589) – and Gawain can similarly offer himself as 'li vostres chevaliers a toz jors mais' to a woman other than the one he is currently in love with (*Livre d'Artus* 261); the offer can indeed be made (as, in effect, here in *Sir Gawain*) by a man to a woman whose offer of love proper he has refused, as in *Ami et Amile* 641–2 ('Mais je serai, ma dame, li vostre hom, Servirai voz a force et a bandon'). It here enables Gawain to respond in a way that is gallant without being amorous, and preserves, as he is anxious to do (1773–5), both his truth and his courtesy.

1280 mydmorn: the term refers to the point (about 9 a.m.) at which it is fully day and the day's activities start (see n. to 1072–3). Hence it signals the hour at which Gawain and the lady will soon be claimed by the daily routines of the castle and when those who were still in bed (1232) will now be up.

1281 The MS reads 'and ay þe lady let lyk ahym loued mych'. *ahy* (the regular abbreviation for a following nasal) is emended to *as hym* by nearly all editors. But more seems to have gone wrong. The idiom is in fact *let as* (cf. 1190, 1201, 2257): there is no example in *MED* of *let as* being varied to *let lik(e) as*. Whatever *lyk* represents probably belonged with the a-verse, which is overlight if the caesura is taken as falling after **let**. *mych* is usually assumed to be an authorial variant of *much*, but the spelling occurs nowhere else in the MS, and the poet noticeably avoids using *much* at line end, where an unstressed syllable is required, and where *swythe* provides the equivalent sense (see e.g. C 987). The line is evidently corrupt, though the alliterative collocations themselves look authentic: for *let-lady/lord-love*, see 1086, 1206, 1733; C 1434.

1282 ferde with defence: the verb defines the situation more explicitly than either of the interlocutors care to do; for its use in the context of a refusal to respond to sexual advances, cf. Ygerne's reaction to the love and proffered gifts of Uther ('Ygerne s'en desfendoit & n'en vaut nul prendre': Vulgate *Merlin* 60), and

the refusal of the narrator to condemn the kick given by Yder to his host's wife ('Jo nel sai pas de co reprendre, Kar il ne se poeit defendre': *Yder* 379–80). For *faren with* = 'practised/engaged in', see *MED faren* 8(b). *Fete* [fashion] in the sense of 'act/behave' is only otherwise attested as a rhyme word in *Laud Troy Book* 3955, and exemplifies the poet's metrical resourcefulness.

- 1283 MS 'pa3 I were burde bry3test þe burde in mynde hade' is retained in T&G and construed with 1282 ('... "even if I were the most beautiful lady", the lady thought'). Same-word alliteration would, however, be highly irregular, and most other editors treat the second *burde* as an error for *burne* (a word with which *burde* frequently collocates: see 1232, 1779; *C* 80; *Pa* 388) and *I* as an error for *ho* [she] and construe with 1284ff. Though we emend *I* to **hit**, not *ho*, the translation in our footgloss is substantially the same as Bennett's.
- 1285 **Bout hone: hone** is otherwise recorded only in the phrase *withouten hone* (used exclusively as a metrical expedient at line ending in rhymed verse); **Bout hone** is the poet's independent variation for metrical reasons: the bob must consist of only one single-stressed iambic foot scanning x/(x).
- 1291 Both *stounen* and *stor* could be used in a non-physical sense, *stounen* to mean 'shock, surprise' (cf. 301), and *stor* to refer to words that are harshly uncomplimentary (*MED stor(e adj* 1b(b)); but the underlying metaphor is from battle, implying a strong or *stor* blow (cf. 'stith strokes and store' at *DT* 1192) that literally 'stuns' (cf. 'Bot he was stonyed of the stroke that he myght not stonde on his feet': *Merlin* 265).
- 1293 The MS reads 'bot þat 3e be Gawan hit got3 in mynde', which yields puzzling sense and an unmetrical b-verse. *hit got3* is sometimes emended (following Gollancz) to *hit got3 not*, but there is no record of such an expression in ME – and any emendation needs to address the fact that the a-verse is, as it stands, also unmetrical. Inserting **ungayn** (which restores a-verse metre) and transposing *hit gos* to **gos hit** (which restores b-verse metre) yields a metaphor from paths and passages that makes sense here: paths were termed *ungayn* if they were difficult to traverse (contrast *G* 1972–4).
- 1296 Editors vary in whether or not they treat **By this skylle** as direct speech, and also react variously to the puzzling **blessed**. For **blessed ... and sayde** introducing parting words that do not in fact include a blessing as such, cf. *C* 470. A blessing (and/or a sign of the cross, which *blissen* was often used to designate) is perhaps to be imagined as prefacing the words that follow. **Bot** suggests that the lady's response allayed Gawain's fears, and,

since the words quoted would not seem to do so, the reassurance must take the form of whatever is conveyed by **blessed**. Her saying 'God bless you' would provide such reassurance. **blessed** is actually glossed 'reassured' by Gollancz (following Thomas 1913), 'probably in the sense of "reassured by her look" '; but, though **Bot** implies the blessing *acted* to reassure Gawain, the word is unlikely to *mean* 'reassure', that sense being inappropriate to the similar verse in *Cleanness*.

- 1297 The second **good** has been supplied, since the a-verse is metrically defective as it stands (lacking a long dip), and scribal omission of it would be readily explicable as correction of apparent dittography. Whatever has dropped, the line must allude to Gawain's sobriquet, as that alone gives any point to **gaynly** (= 'directly, i.e. explicitly, specifically', or perhaps, as at 476, 'aptly') and explains why **good**, as well as **courtaysye** (1298), is relevant to the lady's reference to the public image of Gawain.
- 1303–4 **prestly** is our emendation of MS *fire* (1304a), which has usually been assumed to represent *firre* [further], and these two lines have been variously glossed on that basis. Davis (T&G) gives 'I shall kiss at your command, and more, as is the duty of a knight lest he displease you.' Burrow (1972) takes *fire* with **plede** (comparing *Pe* 563), and assumes 1304 means 'so don't argue for anything more than that, lest (this knight) should be obliged to displease you (by refusing)'. But, since 1304a also lacks a second alliterating stress, we have preferred to replace the problematic *fire* with an unobtrusive emendation that does not alter the essential point of the line: Gawain evades replying to the lady's logic by effectively telling her there is no need for her to justify or **plede** what her mere wish can command from him.
- 1308 **dos her forth at the dor**: for this use of reflexive *don* + *adverbial phrase*, cf. 'Hii dude hom vorth in to the se' (Robert of Gloucester 933) and *MED don* 5d(a). For the idiom **without dyn more** [without more ado, promptly], cf. 'And were ded in the depe withouten dyn more' (*DT* 5764).
- 1315 Cf. Will at the house of Clergie: 'Was neuere gome upon this ground ... Fairer underfongen ne frendloker at ese Than myself' (*PP* B.10.226–8; cf. also *Stanzaic Morte Arthur* 3503).
- 1319 **lent on his gamnes**: for *lenden* [come, arrive] *on* used in the sense 'be engaged in (sports)' and used of hunting, cf. 'The Kyng to scherwod gan wend, On hys pleying for to lend ... The grete hertys for to hunte' (*King and the Hermit* 16–19).
- 1324 **querre**, the term for the ceremony of rewarding the dogs by feeding them on the flayed skin (OF *cuiree*) of one of the dead

animals, was also used (as here) of the place where the game was collected prior to that ceremony; cf. ‘All the while that the huntynge lasteth schulde the carteres go aboute fro place to place, to brynge deer to the quirre’ (*Master of Game* 107), ‘To the quyrre then the Perce went, to se the bryttlynge off the deare’ (*Hunting of the Cheviot*, stanza 8).

1325–8 For the **assay** the deer was turned on its back and an incision made in its breast to test the thickness of the flesh. Conduct of the assay was an honour and privilege. Cf. ‘The best man in the companie must come in and take the assay’ (Cockaine 10), ‘the chiefe huntsman doth holde the Deare by the forefoote, whiles the Prince or chief, cut a slyt ... This is done to see the goodnesse of the flesh, and howe thicke it is’ (Gascoine 134). The prestige attached to the ceremony is probably reflected in the plural **summe** at 1328 (= selected persons from among those present) and **The best** at 1325 (= all those of social standing). **The best** cannot here refer to the lord himself, since it is followed by plural verbs and pronouns (**diden**, **summe**, **were**, **thay**).

1329 Even the leanest deer is found to have **Two fynGRES** breadth of fat: cf. ‘And I slitte hym at the assaye to see how me semyde, And he was floreschede [lined with fat] full faire of two fyngere brede’ (P3A 70–71).

1330 ‘Making the erber’ involved tying up the gullet (**erber**) to prevent its contents from spilling.

1332 **rytte** = ‘slit (the skin of)’ (not ‘cut off’: the legs of the deer were normally left on to facilitate carriage; see n. to **1357**). Cf. ‘And than the herbere anone aftir I makede; I rauhte the righte legge byfore, ritt it theraftir, And so fro legge to legge I lepe thaym aboute, And the fell fro the fete fayre I departede’ (P3A 74–7).

1337–8 Cf. ‘We use some ceremonie in taking out the shoulder ...he cuts an hole bytwene the legge and the brysket, and there puts in his knife, and loosene the shoulder from the syde ...untill he have quyte taken out the shoulder, and yet lefte the skynne of the syde fayre and whole’ (Gascoine 134–5).

1340–42 The process of ‘dressing the numbles’ (removing the offal between neck and leg) begins with the **avanters**, the neck offal, which is reached by slitting the throat (**gargulun**) right to the **byghte**, the fork of the front legs. Cf. ‘Than dresst the Nombles: first that ye reke Downe the avaucners; kerue that cleves to the necke’ (*Boke of St Albans* 1792–3).

1344 **ryde**: forms with short and long *i* occur in *MED* sv *ridden*, but we have not regularized to *ridde*, since the variant forms may represent separate items, deriving from OE **ryddan*/ON *ryðja* and

OE **rydan* respectively. As noted by Holthausen 1934: 376, *ryde* with long vowel probably once occurred in the deer-breaking episode of *Sir Tristrem*, where rhyme suggests that MS *right* at 474 is an error for *ride*.

- 1345 Even down:** we take MS *euenden* to be a shortened form of or error for *even down*. Cf. ‘And slytteth hym down even to th’assay [i.e. the breast]’ (*Boke of St Albans* 1758), ‘And from the assay even downe the ball ye shul slytte’ (*Boke of St Albans* (Rawl. Poet. 143) 277). The art consisted in freeing the numbles from the carcase in such a way that they remained intact and in one piece (**that henged all samen**): cf. ‘And heve up the nombles hoole ... In thyn hond than hem holde, and looke and se that all that longith them to togeder that thay be’ (*Boke of St Albans* 1801–3).
- 1349–50** Cf. ‘Then shall ye kutte the skertes [folds of skin] the thies [thighs] even fro’ (*Boke of St Albans* (Rawl. Poet. 143) 335).
- 1355 corbeles fee:** a piece of gristle (from the end of the breastbone) thrown to the crows or ravens for good luck. Cf. ‘[I] Cuttede corbyns bone and kest it awaye’ (P3A 80), ‘The raven he yave his yiftes’ (*Sir Tristrem* 502). On **fee**, see n. to **1358**.
- 1357 by hoghes of the fourches:** the legs were used to truss up the venison. Cf. ‘And hardeles hem fast The sides and the fourches togedre that thei last With the hinder legges’ (*Boke of St Albans* 357–9), ‘It must be remembered ... that the feete be all foure left on. The hynder feete must be to fasten (or hardle as some hunters call it) the hanches to the sydes, and the two forefeete are left to hang up the shoulders by’ (Gascoine 134).
- 1358 fonges:** MS *for* yields a locution that lacks a main verb. For the collocation of *fong* and *fee*, cf. 1622. The person who killed the deer, the one who undid it, the forester, the lord and others could all claim a part of the carcase as their perquisite or **fee**. Cf. ‘The hunter shall have his fee and everyman aftur his ryght’ (Twiti 27).
- 1359–60** In *Sir Tristrem* the dogs are similarly rewarded ‘With hert, liver and lightes, And blod’ (497–8), which are similarly placed **Upon a felle** (‘on hyde’: *Sir Tristrem* 500). The dogs thus learned to associate their reward with the scent of the deer’s skin.
- 1362 prys** (< OF *pris* [captured]) was blown not only to signal that the deer was taken, but also during the *cuiree*, the ceremonial feeding of the dogs on the deer’s skin. See Phébus 183.
- 1364 Strakande:** to ‘strake’ is to blow a repeated horn-signal, announcing the homeward journey. Cf. 1923 and Chaucer, *Book of the Duchess* 1312–13 (‘They gan to strake forth; al was doon ... the hert-huntyng’).
- 1372 syre** (cf. 1083) is the emendation (of MS *lorde*) suggested by

Gollancz.

- 1377 The **tayles** [tails] of the deer were not removed. Cf. ‘let the taylle of the beest stille theroon byde’ (*Boke of St Albans* 1770). They here seem to indicate the several individual carcasses, though an actual pun on *taille* [tally], suggested by A&W, seems unlikely, since that word referred to a tally-stick, and is recorded in the sense of ‘number’ only in the set expressions *each taile, in taile*, and would in any case figure in the singular if the reference were to the full *tally* or number of the carcasses.
- 1379 To *win pris* was to gain credit or acknowledged pre-eminence in a class or field (*MED pris* n(1) 8(c) and 9(b)). The lord is asking if he has deserved top marks as a hunter, and Gawain’s reply (1381–2) assures him that he has.
- 1403 **wale wyne**: cf. C 1716.
- 1405 **To fylle the same forwardes**: cf. ‘this forward to fille’ (*DT* 602).
- 1406 **chaunce ... acheves** (MS *bytyde*3): for the collocation, cf. 1081, 1838, 2103 and C 1125 (‘if hit cheve the chaunce’). For intransitive use of the verb, cf. ‘auntres to telle Of chivalry & chaunce that chevyt him before’ (*DT* 517–18; cf. *Awntyrs* 269).
- 1407 For the partitive genitive, cf. (with reference to the Creation) ‘Ilc kinde newes ... was broght’ (*Genesis and Exodus* 250).
- 1408–9 The jovial pledges are nevertheless accompanied by all the formalities that authenticated serious contracts. Commitment to the terms of the agreement (**covenauntes**) is declared before witnesses (**before the court alle**), and the deal is formally sealed with a drink (**beverage**): cf. 1112 and n.
- 1412 **cakled bot thryes**: i.e. before the cock resumed its daytime crowing routine; it was believed to crow three times during the night (at midnight, at three o’clock and one hour before sunrise). Cf. ‘Til that the thridde cok bigan to synge’ (*CT* I.4233).
- 1415 **sprenged**: ME *sprengen* [sprinkle, scatter] occurs only in this poem (cf. 2009) in the sense of ‘to dawn’ (for which the normal verb was *springen*, past tense *sprang*, *sprong*); it is an ingenious stratagem for avoiding an unmetrical masculine line ending.
- 1419–20 **Uncoupled ... Raches**: the smaller running dogs or **Raches** ran free (cf. 1425–6), while the larger **blodhounds** were held on a leash and released either to force the hunted animal from its shelter or to pick up the scent if the running dogs had lost it (cf. 1436).
- 1419 The aficionados to whom all three hunts are addressed would know in advance the animal involved. The setting **among tho thornes** indicates a boar hunt: boars ‘lie moste commonly in the strongest holdes of Thornes’ (Gascoine 151). A boar hunt is also

consistent with the temporal setting (the Christmas season): 'The seson of the boore is from the Nativyte [8 September] Tyll the purificacioun [2 February] of owre lady so fre' (*Boke of St Albans* 1434–5).

- 1421 On the three-line-deep initial capital here, cf. 619 and 763 and notes. **kerre** is a rare dialect word which survives in place names from the North-West Midlands, e.g. 'Sowcar' (sow's marsh) in Cheshire (Elliott 1984: 77, 147).
- 1422–4 Cf. Twiti 21 (describing the hare hunt): 'yf ye sen that any hound fynde alonlyche [by himself] of hyr, and he hathe a name as Recher or Bemound, ye schull sey this: *Oyez a Bemound le vaylaunt* [Listen to the brave Bemound] ... ! And so for to draw all other houndes to hym.'
- 1426 **glaverande glam**: **glaverande** is written as one word in the MS (with **-er-** abbreviated). The emendation to **glaver ande glam**, adopted by some editors, is unnecessary. The verb *glaveren* [to speak loudly or deceitfully] is well attested; the noun *glaver* is not, the only evidence for it being WA 5630, 'A grete glaur & a glaam of Grekin tongis', where *glaur* & *a* could represent original *glauerande*.
- 1436 **blodhoundes**: see n. to 1419–20.
- 1438 The adverb **unsoundely** is recorded only here and at C 201: 'Ne never so sodenly soght unsoundely to venge'.
- 1440 The boar leaves the **sounder** [herd] when fully grown: 'And when he is of iiii yere a boore shall he be, From the sounder of the swyne then departtith he, A singuler is he so, for alone he will goo' (*Boke of St Albans* 1314–16). **soght was** (MS *wi3t*): cf. *Pa* 116.
- 1441 **borlych and brod**: MS illegible. The solution adopted here is that of A&W, who cite *P3A* 32: 'And therto borely and brode' (describing a hunted hart).
- 1442 **gronyed**: a realistic detail. The boar grunts when attacking: cf. *Master of Game* 29 ('he playneth nat ne crieth not bot whan he renneth upon the men than he manesseth, strongly gronyng') and *Avowing* 192.
- 1444 **boute spyt more**: previous editors have understood **spyt** as the noun 'spite' [malice, ill-treatment] and construed the verse 'without doing further harm'. But the contextual emphases make a phrase downplaying the harm done by the boar improbable, and **spyt** seems rather to be an (otherwise unrecorded) aphetic form of the noun *respit*, **boute spyt more** thus being a version of 'without more/longer respite (i.e. immediately)'; cf. 'With that word, withouten moore respit, They fillen gruf and criden pitously' (*CT* I.948–9), 'Evene thus, withoute more respit He spak

to him' (Lydgate, *Troy Book* 4.4727–8).

- 1446 rechated** [summoned the hunt]: cf. 'donqe devez vous corner en ceste manere, une mote et pus rechater: *Trou-rout – trou-rou-rou-rou-rout ...* Vous venour, purquey cornez vous yssi? Pur ceo d'avoir les gentz qe sont entour la chace a moi, et rechater les chens que sont passez hors de bonde' [then you must blow the horn in this fashion, one blast and then reheat: *Trou-rout – trou-rou-rou-rou-rout ...* Hunter, why do you blow like this? To bring the company around to me, and to call back the dogs which are out of bounds] (Twiti 8–9).
- 1450 Ful oft he bides the bay**: the boar (unlike the timid deer) often turns to face hunters. Cf. 'Quant on les chasce, ilz se font volentiers abayer au partir dou lit pour l'ourgeuill qu'ilz ont' [when one chases them, they readily let themselves be brought to bay after leaving their lair because of the aggression they have] (Phébus 90).
- 1452 He hurtes of the houndes**: for **hurtes of** cf. 'And hurtes of the hardieste that one the erthe lenges' (*MA* 3830) and, in the context of a boar hunt, 'He has ... hurte of my howundes' (*Avowing* 35–6); cf. 'Des chiens i fait damage grant, Plus de cent en ad ocis' (*Gui* 6822–3). *MED* sv *hurten* 5(a) misconstrues **hurtes of** as meaning 'drive away'.
- 1453 yomerly yaule and yelle**: cf. 'a yomerly yarm of yellyng' (C 971).
- 1456–8** On barbed hunting arrows, see n. to **1162**; they similarly fail to **bite** into the boar's hide at *Sir Eglamour* L 390. **scheldes** designates the tough hide of the boar at the neck and shoulders: 'Thei [boars] han an hard skyn and stronge flessch, and specially vpon the shuldire, that is called the sheeld' (*Master of Game* 28). Cf. the boar in *Avowing* 195–8: 'Ther may no dyntus [blows] him dere [hurt], So sekir was his schilde. The grete schafte that was longe All to spildurs [splinters] hit spronge.'
- 1457 barbes of his browe bite non wolde**: i.e. the head is as protected by the tough **browe** as the body by the tough **scheldes** (1456). A&W's interpretation ('and none would penetrate the **barbes** [bristles] of his brow') is improbable. **of** goes with **bite**, *bite of* having the same sense as *bite in/on* (see **G 426** and the boar hunt in *Sir Eglamour* L 389–90: 'His nobill spere on hym he brast It wolde nott in hym bytt'): cf. 'And in my hand a brighte browne brand That will well bite of thee' (*Robin Hood's Death*, stanza 19).
- 1463 allyte**: as the line has vowel alliteration, MS *on lyte* [in delay: cf. 2303] is probably best represented by its variant *olite/allyt(e)* (cf. C 599): stress on a prefix is a licence commonly met with in alliterative verse (Duggan 1990).

- 1465 **As burn bold upon bent**: see nn. to 353 and 1136.
- 1466 **rechated**: see n. to 1446.
- 1467 **schafted**: the verb occurs only here, but cf. the noun *shaft* in the sense of ‘beam of sunlight as seen as the sun becomes lower in the sky’ recorded in Scots (*DOST* sv *shaft* 6).
- 1468 The expression was common; cf. e.g. ‘& so driven forth the day til the derke night’ (*William* 3526).
- 1481 As in 1226, the lady exploits Gawain’s reputation as a paragon of courtesy and gallantry (see pp. 253–5). Her point is that her guest has behaved so ungallantly that he cannot be the famous Gawain.
- 1485 **that yisterday I taghte**: see 1297–301. MS *taȝtte* has been assumed by A&W and others to represent *taght te/the*; but the lady normally addresses Gawain with the polite pronoun *you*.
- 1491 **courtaysye**, in the lady’s usage, comes to mean not simply ‘good manners’ but also ‘the art of playing the lover’.
- 1493, 1497 **devaye**, from OF *desveier* [refuse], occurs only in *Sir Gawain* in these two lines. Metre requires stress on the prefix at 1493, but on the stem at 1497.
- 1497 The lady’s logic has parallels in Arthurian romance, where women can argue of a model knight that ‘cele ne seroit mie courtoise ne sage qui a tel chevalier refuseroit s’amor’ [she would be neither courtly nor right-minded who could refuse her love to such a knight] (Vulgate *Merlin* 324; cf. 157).
- 1499 **in thede there I lende**: that women are not to be taken by force is said in many romances to be a principle specific to Arthur’s land. See e.g. *Chevalier de la charrete* 1302–10, *CT* III.889–93.
- 1502 **leve** has been understood by previous editors to mean either ‘desist, leave off’ or ‘depart’. But the verb was often used as a negative of a preceding one (see *MED* *leven* v¹ 1(f)), and for **lach** ... **leve** meaning ‘take it or not take it, take it or leave it’, cf. ‘But fastynge is ... To take or leve whether we wil’ (*St Euphrosyne* 151–2), ‘Here I tythe this unthende sheff; Lete God take it or ellys lef’ (*N-Town Plays* III.101–2). For **thinkes** meaning ‘seems good, pleases’, see *MED* *thinken* v¹ 2(a), where examples include ‘Godd ... doth all thatt himm thinkethth’ (*Ormulum* 12439).
- 1506–7 Talking about love was a courtly accomplishment and pastime; see n. to 927.
- 1510 **yong** and **yep** formed a standard collocation; cf. 60, 951 and nn. and C 881.
- 1512–19 The sentence begun at 1508 is interrupted by a parenthesis dealing with what knights usually do in romances: they risk their lives for the sake of love, finally bringing ‘bliss’ into their ladies’

chambers. On the repeated reference to books (**letrure**, **tytelet token**, **tyxt**), see pp. 253–4. The lady implies that Gawain is not living up to the image of the ideal knight of chivalric romance.

- 1515 **tytelet token**: the lady is thinking of the rubricated headings announcing the contents of forthcoming portions of texts. **her werkes** could refer to the deeds of knights but also to the works (of literature) about them. This blurring of life and chivalric fiction is consistent with the lady's purpose.
- 1516–17 This is an accurate description of the plot of many romances. Cf. 'And sum has langinge of luf layes to herken, How ledis for thaire lemmans has langor endured' (WA 6–7). Cf. also '[There is no man] Qui tantes *dolurs* ait *enduré* Pur une femme cum jo ai pur lei' [who has endured so much grief for a woman as I have for her sake] (Gui 7606–7).
- 1518 **care** often refers in ME specifically to love-longing; cf. 1254 and *MED care* n¹ 2(a).
- 1519 For the collocations, cf. 'That brought hire to boure with blisse' (PP B.3.103). *Bounty* regularly had the sense 'valour, prowess' in chivalric contexts, and the previous line, together with the whole emphasis of the lady (whose model knight is more of a romantically macho figure than was that presented by the poet at 631–55), indicates that **bountees** refers to chivalric prowess, the plural form suggesting the sense 'chivalric feats': cf. 'He thoct ... To do ane owtrageous bounte' (Barbour, *Bruce* III.130–32).
- 1521 Cf. Minot 8/29 ('The word of him walkes ful wide') and see Hall 1887: 80–81 for further examples of the expression.
- 1525–6 **ye ... Oghe**: in the sense 'ought' (as opposed to 'owe'), the verb is elsewhere impersonal and construed with dative pronoun. The intervening relative clause has probably permitted a construction (with nominative **ye**) which would otherwise, in the normal adjacency of pronoun and verb, appear as *yow oghe*.
- 1529 On **dalyaunce** [conversation] and **daly** [converse], see n. to 1253–4. The lady's usage suggests the common *application* of the word to love talk, though the suggestiveness is veiled behind the more innocent strict *sense* of the term.
- 1532 **game**: *MED* creates a special entry (*game* 2b, 'courtly accomplishment') for this passage, and for one in *Sir Tristrem* 1249–73 (where the sense is 'skill in music'). But the lady is in fact using a broader sense of the word ('amusement, pastime') as a decorous veil for its narrower one ('love-making': see *MED game* 2d); cf. n. to 1529.
- 1540 **torvayle** (from ON) is not recorded elsewhere.
- 1549 The normal meaning of *frainen* is 'ask, enquire', and Burrow glosses 'put questions to'. We follow A&W and T&G, who gloss

‘made trial of’, a sense which (though not recognized in *MED*) is suggested by the collocation with **fonded** [tempted, tested] and which seems attested at *Pe* 129 and supported by *G* 489 (both instances figuring in *MED* sv *frainen* 5 (‘seek’)).

1550 MS *wōze* has here been interpreted as the noun **woghe** (cf. *Pe* 622); T&G read it as the verb ‘woo’, of which it is indeed a possible form.

1552 non evel on nauther halve: by treating the lady’s coquetry as the gracious condescension of a hostess (see e.g. **1536–9**), Gawain ensures that no ‘fault’ **semed** [was apparent: 1551] on her part or on his own; that is, not sacrificing his courtesy to his truth (cf. 1773–5), he rejects her advances, not by snubbing or abusing her, but by putting an innocent construction on her words. The line alliterates on *n*. The first stave is supplied by linking alliteration on **non evel**, the second and third by the word **nauther** used in different senses: as the adjective ((n)either’) and, correlated with preceding **Ne**, as conjunction (‘nor’).

1559 diner, the first meal of the day (the second being *supper*), was eaten at around noon, and here follows straight after morning Mass. Cf. 71 and *n*.

1562 For **uncely** [unblessed, harmful] applied to an animal in the sense of ‘dangerous, vicious’, cf. ‘So frek [fierce] was that uncely hounde that he him filched [fell upon] felli thare’ (*Altenglische Legenden* 79).

1570 rasse: the word is otherwise found only in *Cleanness*, where Noah’s ark comes to rest ‘On the rasse of a rok’ (446). Most likely related to OF *raser* [to raze, clear], *ras* [level (ground)] apparently refers to a level shelf or ledge of rock in *Cleanness*, and here in *Sir Gawain* to a patch of level ground caused by an inlet (**hole**, 1569) in a rocky bank that bounds the water: an inlet which provides a defensive position, being approachable only by crossing the water from the opposite shore (which the lord does when he decides to tackle the animal: 1585). For other explanations of the word, see Anderson (who derives it from OF *rase* [ditch] and glosses ‘cleft, crevice’) and Elliott 1984: 78–9 (who reads it as ON *rás* [water course]).

1573–6 The boar-hunters in Douglas’s *Aeneid* likewise do not dare to attack the animal except **on-ferum** [from a distance]: ‘Bot standand far on dreih wyth dart and speyr ...’ (X.xii.64).

1573 Whettes his white tusches: this signals a forthcoming charge; cf. ‘Thenne his tussches con he quette, Opon the kynge for to sette ... Wyth wrath he begynnus to wrote, He ruskes [tears] uppe mony a rote Wyth tussches of thre fote’ (*Avowing* 185–9).

1578–9 thought ... ful lothe Be ... torne: for *think loth* (+ infinitive)

meaning 'be reluctant to contemplate, be unwilling to face the prospect of', cf. 'The bischop ... Thoght lathe to abyde that pyne' (*Life of St Cuthbert* 7126).

1581–4 The vocabulary – **knicht**, **blonke** (a poetic word), **corsour** (always used of a knight's steed), **Braydes out a bryght bronde** (cf. 1901) – serves to present this encounter as a heroic act of chivalric prowess. Cf. Arthur's struggle with the boar in *Avowing* 209–14: 'Thenne the King ... wightely wan on his fete ... Did as a dughty knyghte, Brayd oute a brand bryghte.' The boar was one of the most dangerous beasts of the chase, and killing it on foot required a courage and skill similar to that needed on the battlefield (with which the hunting field was often aligned: see n. to 1136 and p. 247). The bravery and doughtiness of the lord in *Sir Gawain* and of Arthur in *Avowing* are thrown into greater relief by Gaston Phébus's advice: to fight the boar not with a sword, but with the boar lance (to keep the animal at arm's length), and not to dismount: 'Et, si'l veult descendre aux abaiz enmi les fortz, ce ne sera mie de mon consoill ... quar, s'il faut a le bien ferir ... le sangler ne le faudra pas a tuer ou blescier' [and, if he wants to dismount at the bay in the thick of the fight, that will never be my advice, for, if he fails to strike him well, the boar will not fail to kill or injure him] (234); the boar can only be killed by the sword in a head-on confrontation, with a blow that requires decisiveness and precision: 'Et c'est bele maistrise et belle chose qui bien scet tuer un sangler de l'espee' [and it is a good skill and a good thing for anyone to know how to kill a boar with sword].

1586 **was ware**: for the inceptive sense ('became aware of, noticed'), see n. to 764.

1593 The boar in *Gui de Warewic* is similarly dispatched when Gui dismounts and thrusts his sword *en l'esclot* (6854–8); the **slot**, the hollow at the base of the throat, is the vulnerable point at which Arthur also aims in *Avowing* 249: 'He bar him inne atte the throte.'

1600 **to deth endite** is an inventive variant (for rhyme) of 'dight to dethe' (cf. *Pa* 488, *Avowing* 136). **endite** [charge, accuse] is a legal term, here used in an extended and metaphorical sense ('condemn, consign') not elsewhere recorded.

1601 **blowyng of prys**: see n. to 1362 and cf. Phébus 235: 'Et quant il l'aura tué, il doit corner prise' [and when he has killed it (the boar), he should blow the horn to signal this].

1605–14 The dismemberment of the boar, like that of the deer, follows a prescribed order. On the correct procedure, see *Boke of St Albans* 1731–47.

1605 **wodcraftes** [skills relevant to the woods and the chase]: cf.

Chaucer's Yeoman: 'Of wodecraft wel koude he al the usage' (*CT* I.110).

- 1607 on high:** the boar's head was carried in triumph on a stake or a spear; cf. 'The King couth of venery: Colurt [beheaded] him full kyndely. The hed of that hardy He sette on a stake' (*Avowing* 257–60), 'The bores hed he dyde forth bere And sette hit vpon a spere' (*Sir Eglamour* C 541–2).
- 1608 all rogh:** the boar, unlike the deer, was cut up without being flayed (Rooney 1993: 175); **all rogh** is therefore an adjective (qualifying the boar) rather than an adverb qualifying the process of dismemberment, as previous editors have assumed. Cf. 'Whenne tho boor is tan, he schalle be undon al roghe' (Twiti 11). For **rogh** = 'hairy, shaggy', see n. to 745. **by the rigge:** cf. 'The knyght is to the bore gon, And cleves hym be the rygge bon' (*Sir Eglamour* 496–7).
- 1609** Cf. 1359–61. When the prey was boar, the offal given to the dogs was first cooked. As Phébus explains (188), boar's meat is much tougher than deer's, but 'when it is cooked it is more palatable and the dogs eat it more readily'.
- 1610 rewardes** is used in the precise sense indicated by Twiti: 'And whan the boor is itake ... ye shall yif to your houndys the bowellis broyled with breed, and it is callyd reward' (18–19). Twiti distinguishes the word from *cuiree* (cf. **querre**, 1324 and n.), which applies only when the dogs are fed 'on the skyn' of the animal (as in the case of deer). It is thus the former term that is correctly used when the hounds in *Sir Gawain* are fed after the boar hunt and (1918) the fox hunt.
- 1611 scheldes** is used here and at 1626, not (as at 1456) of the tough shoulder hide of the boar, but of slabs or cuts of boar's meat, which was measured by the *scutum* in Latin or by the *sheld* in English: see *MED* sv *braun* 3 and *sheld* 4(b), and cf. C 58.
- 1612 hastlettes:** cf. 'And yf he [the boar] be vndo as it his rygth, he schall have xxxii hastelettes' (Twiti 24). These 'hastelettes' were valued culinary items. The word derives from *hasta* [spear] and had a general sense (food that was spit-roasted), and a narrower hunting one (the choicest parts of the carcase of a wild boar). These eminently edible **hastlettes** have been assumed by previous editors (and *MED* and *OED*) to be portions of the entrails, but that sense of the term is post-medieval, and the **boweles** [entrails] have already been fed to the hounds (1609–10): see Scott-Macnab 2010, who cites Twiti and *Boke of St Albans*, where the thirty-two *hastelettes* or *breidis* [roasting parts] itemized are not offal, but cuts from loins, limbs, etc.
- 1613 halches:** see n. to 185.

- 1615 **swythe**, not in the MS, has been supplied for metrical reasons.
- 1616 The boar's head (usually borne on a stake or a spear) was ceremoniously presented to the household. Scenes of this kind are depicted in contemporary MS illustrations (see Cummins 1988: 43, 105) and lie behind a number of late-medieval Christmas carols: 'Boar's Head Carol, II' begins 'The boris hed in hondes I brynge ... I pray you all, helpe me to synge ...' (1–3).
- 1623 **laghede** is Gollancz's emendation of MS & *lazed*. See further Putter 2009: 38–43. The emendation more usually adopted, *and lazter*, is unmetrical. **mery** is here an adverb, as also at line ending at C 1516.
- 1628 **werre**: regularized from MS *were*, which is sometimes construed as representing a different noun (*MED* *wer(e n 5*: 'danger, confusion'). But the spelling *werre* for *were* occurs elsewhere in the MS (e.g. *G* 271).
- 1636 **fyne forward and fast**: cf. 'Yore forward was full fyne' (*Sir Amadace* 738); **fyne** has in these contexts a legal sense (derived from Latin *finalis concordia* [finalized agreement]) and means 'absolute, formally valid'; see Alford 1988: 59 and *MED* *sv fin adj* 8. **forward** and **fast** are often collocated (as at 2347 and C 327).
- 1639 We follow most previous editors in inserting **hent** (not in the MS).
- 1642 **covenauntes ... knit**: cf. C 564 ('He knit a covenant') and see n. to 619–65.
- 1644 **saynt Gile**: St Giles or Aegidius (c.700), patron saint of the prosperous guild of goldsmiths, and one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers.
- 1648 **tables** were 'boards' placed on trestles at mealtimes (cf. 884, C 832) and removed afterwards. Fixed 'tables' in the modern sense of the word were rare enough to attract special comment: see *CT* I.353–4.
- 1649 **clere white**: if retained, MS *clere lyzt* would have to be read as the subject of **Wakened**, with **waxene torches** as grammatically in apposition with it ('clear light then, waxen torches, were kindled along the walls'); Gollancz's interpretation of **waxene torches** as the object of **set** (1651) is implausible, since **set and served** [seated and served] was an established collocation (see n. to 1651). The emendation here adopted is consistent with the poet's avoidance of enjambement and is supported by 884–5: 'Sone was telded up a table on trestes ful fayre, Clad with a clene cloth that clere white schewed.'
- 1650 **waxene torches**: candles and torches were made of either tallow (cheap) or wax (expensive). The adjective thus indicates wealth and status.

- 1651 Segges set and served:** *Segges* refers to the diners (as in 115), who are the direct object of **set** [seated] **and served**; cf. C 1401 ('When all segges were there set, then servyce begines'). For 'set and served', cf. *William* 4906 ('thei [were] semli served and sett'); *Alexander* A 979 ('As soone as thei were sett and served'); CA I.252, VI.499, VIII.716. **set** cannot here mean 'set the table' (T&G), for that in ME would refer to the setting of the table boards on trestles, which has already been described at 1648.
- 1652 glam and much gle:** MS *glam & gle* yields an a-verse without a long dip.
- 1653 fire upon flet** (cf. 832 and 1925): see n. to 832–3.
- 1654** Alliterative stress on the preposition **At** is justified by the contrast with **after**.
- 1655 coundutes:** part-songs, originally liturgical (Latin *conductus*), but soon associated with domestic festivities and with Christmas in particular: 'to Cristesmasse Wane riche and poure, more and lasse Singeth cundut night and dai' (*Owl and Nightingale* 481–3).
- 1657 our luflyche lede:** cf. 1469. **lede** is an emendation of MS *knyȝt*. See Putter et al. 2007: 127, 130 for discussion of this common type of scribal substitution.
- 1659 stille stollen countenaunce:** for the use of **stollen** in amorous contexts (with the sense 'furtive, secret'), cf. 'The stole touchis, the lokis amerous' (Lydgate, *Troy Book* 2.4181; cf. Lydgate, *Siege of Thebes* 1669), 'a stille stollen steven' (C 706).
- 1660 wroth with himselven:** **wroth** has here an extension of the sense it bore when used of a division or difference arising between a couple normally 'at one', but who fall at variance (cf. *Pe* 378–9 and see *MED wroth adj* 1(e)); a single person here similarly suffers from conflicting impulses that likewise put a normally united self at variance with itself.

- 1662 **howso**: MS *how se euer* yields a four-syllable dip, which, in the b-verse, is unmetrical (see Inoue and Stokes 2012). Cf. ‘howso [var. *howsoeuer*] I turne it’ (PP B.17.186b, ed. Kane and Donaldson).
- 1663 **To wrast**: MS *towrast* has previously been construed as a past participle of *wresten* (with prefix *to*), meaning ‘twisted, awry’. But, since the verb is not elsewhere attested with the prefix, **wrast** may be the noun *wrest*, which does occur in figurative application (‘an ill turn’: see MED *wrest(e* 1(c)). In either case, the point is that Gawain’s courteous response could work against him by being misconstrued as a favourable response to the lady’s ogling.
- 1669 The verb **norne** is recorded only in this MS and in *StE*. It designates a speech act in all cases (G 2443; C 65, 669, 803; *StE* 101, 152, 195) except G 1661, 1771 and 1823, where it seems to have an underlying sense of ‘turn (oneself, someone or something) in a certain direction’. The precise sense of **norne on the same note** is unclear, and the phrase has been variously glossed: ‘carry on the same business’ (Burrow), ‘do the same’ (A&W), ‘propose the same terms’ (T&G).
- 1675 **longe before pryme**: prime, a protean term, could refer to the 6.00 a.m. office of that name, to sunrise, to the whole period before Terce (i.e. 6.00–9.00 a.m.) or to the beginning or to the end of that period (see MED *prim(e* n 1a(a)). Consistency with 1073 and 2085 rules out all but the last. See n. to 1072–3.
- 1677 **holde the touches**: *the* is the normal spelling of *thee* in the MS, so the phrase may be read as either ‘hold touches with you’ or ‘hold the touches’, but no recognizable sense of *touch* suggests itself in either case. The expression is glossed ‘keep a covenant’ in MED (*sv touch(e* 1(d)), where the only other entry is ‘Than take ther oth next, bi touche of honde’ (Lydgate, *St Alban* 173), which clearly refers to a handshake. But the suggested connection between the two citations is too elliptical to be entirely convincing, and the exact logic of **holde the touches** is not clear, though ‘keep covenant’ must be the general sense.
- 1680 **thrid tyme throwe best**: cf. ‘Men sais the thrid time thrawes best’ (*Seven Sages of Rome* 2062).
- 1681 Cf. ‘He [the grasshopper] mas him miri whils he may, of mischef has no mynde’ (*Lament* 19).
- 1682 Hope is advocated on similar grounds in *Flamenca*: ‘que desconort / aconsec hom assas per tems’ [for one can obtain grief soon enough] (4105–6).
- 1688 **his craftes kepes**: cf. *Cursor* T 625–6, where the reference is to

God, who has just paraded the animals before Adam and is about to create Eve: 'This kyng that con his craftes kepe Slegly he made Adam to slepe.' This suggests 'keeps his crafts' means 'continues to ply the (skilled) pursuits distinctive of and chosen by him'. Plural **craftes** often has the general sense 'activity, conduct' rather than the narrower one of 'skills, arts' (cf. C 549), but both senses would be appropriate to the expression as used in *Cursor* and *Sir Gawain*.

- 1695 Cf. 'Rogh rakkes [clouds] there ros with rudnyng anunder' (*Pa* 139), 'Ruddon of the day-rawe ros upon ughten' (C 893).
- 1697 **unhardeled**: a *hardel* was a group of leashed hounds: 'than shuld the sergeaunt of the mute ... make alle hem of the office ... hardle her houndes, and in every hardel suffisen ii or iii couple of houndes atte the moost' (*Master of Game* 108).
- 1699ff The fox-hunting season ran from 25 September to 25 March, and a fox hunt is thus consistent with the date (31 December). The fox was best hunted after Christmas 'because the wood is clearer, since the leaves have fallen, and one can better see and observe one's dogs ... And also the pelts of foxes are worth more then than at any other time. And also the dogs do better because they see it more often and can chase it from closer by' (Phébus 244).
- 1699 **fel in the fuyt there the fox bode**: cf. 1425, **fellen ... to the fuyt**.
- 1700 MS *atrayteres* is usually emended to **a-traverce**; cf. 'So trayled and trifled a-traverce were alle' (C 1473).
- 1701 **kenet**: 'Ther ben also rennyng houndes, some lasse [smaller] and some moor [larger], and the lasse byn clepid kenettis and thes houndes rennen wel to al maner game' (*Master of Game* 61). **the hunt on him calles**: the hunter would cry out the name of the dog that picked up the scent (see n. to 1422–4).
- 1707–8 **tournayes ... Havalounes**: these tricks are characteristic of the fox. Cf. 'he will have a very good chase, because the fox twists and turns [*tournee*] on his home ground before he ventures into the open' (Phébus 245), 'to *hauylon* as doos the fox with his gyle' (*Boke of St Albans* 1509).
- 1707 *MED* records no other instances in which any adjective derived from **tene** [harm, trouble] is applied to a place, as here and at 2075 (those places being, in very different senses, 'productive of physical pain and distress'). But *Scots* offers a parallel: cf. the inhospitable terrain traversed by Arthur in *Gologras*: 'torris and tene wais, teirful quha tellis' (33).
- 1709 **spenne** occurs only in this text (three times), in *WA* (once) and in a deed cited in *MED* sv *spenne* (b). The word here and at 1896

is glossed ‘hedge, fence’ by editors and *MED*, but the tag usage at 1074 (where **In spenne** = there) and the instance in *WA* 4291 (‘Al at [that] was sperpellid [scattered] on the spene & spilt with the blastis’) imply a patch of open ground – which would here give more significance to **by a little dich**: the fox is aiming to get out of the wood (cf. 1711 and n. to 1712–14), but remains under cover for as long as possible, traversing the **spenne** by means of a skirting ditch, and stealing out under cover of a strip of marshy scrubland at 1710. For **lepes over** meaning ‘traverses’ (rather than ‘vaults’), cf. 2154, and for a hunted fox using a ditch for concealment, cf. *Couronnement de Renart* 771 (‘S’est enbatus en une rasse’). The scenario recurs at 1896: the lord **sprent over a spenne** in the direction of the fox, which he sees again emerging from the cover of some rough patch of wood, a **rough greve** (1898) that is obviously comparable with the **strothe-rande** at 1710. **sprent over** parallels **lepes over** and can again mean ‘sped across’ rather than ‘jumped over’.

- 1710 strothe** [scrubby marshland] occurs otherwise only in place names, and, except in references to a *rand* or rasher of bacon, **rande** [strip] is similarly recorded elsewhere only in place names and surnames.
- 1711 wylt ... wode**: cf. ‘And sa thai willid into a wod’ (*WA* 4261).
- 1712–14** The fox must be prevented from escaping the emparked forest. According to Phébus (244), therefore, hunters with greyhounds (cf. **All gray**) should be positioned, out of the wind so that the fox cannot smell them (cf. **ere he wyst**), around the perimeter of the forest – especially where the terrain is dense and bushy and the fox will want to flee from cover (cf. 1710–11).
- 1716 start astray**: *DT* 6255–7 (‘Abidis here ... Lokis well to the listis, that no lede passe. If any stert upon stray, strike hom to dethe’) and *Gologras* 19 (‘Mony sterne our the streit stertis on stray’) indicate that the sense of the phrase is ‘leave one’s place, set off, strike out’.
- 1719 lef upon list**: the first word is hard to decipher, but appears to be *lof* or *lef*, not *lif*, as is generally assumed. The standard emendation to *list vpon lif* is open to further objections: it repeats a tag just used (1717), and in that tag, in this MS, the noun always occurs in the inflected *-ve* form.
- 1720 menged togeder**: the harmonious blending of the cries of dogs on the trail was dear to the ears of hunters (see 1915); cf. ‘Alle men that mut herde of the muri houndes’ (*William* 2192), ‘My hounds are ... matched in mouth like bells, Each under each. A cry more tuneable Was never holla’d nor cheered with horn’ (*Midsummer Night’s Dream* IV.i.119–23).

- 1722 **clyffes ... clatered on hepes**: cf. ‘Castels [siege towers] clateren doun’ (*SJ* 573).
- 1723 **halowed**: cf. Cockaine 5: ‘every huntsman his part is to hew him [the fox], or backe him into the Covert againe, when hee offereth to breake the same, and to hallowe him’.
- 1724 **Yonde** (*MS loude*): the emendation, proposed by Gollancz, both regularizes the metre and clarifies the syntactical organization of 1723–5 (**Here ... Yonde ... There**).
- 1725 **thef**: a term applied to the fox (who ‘steals’ lambs and poultry), not only in the literary tradition of the beast epic, in which he figures as *Renart le larron*, but also in hunting manuals: cf. ‘theef in the wood’ (*Master of Game* 106).
- 1726 **titleres**: the word (not otherwise recorded in ME) occurs in Cotgrave’s *Dictionarie* (1611) sv *tiltre*: ‘a brace of dogs layed in a place to be let slip at a deere as he passeth by’. This is pointed out in T&G, as also is the derivation of the word from OF *ti(l)tre*, defined in Godefroy’s *Dictionnaire* as a relay station where dogs are placed so that they can better pursue the animal when it passes.
- 1729 **lad hem by lagmon**: the expression otherwise occurs only in the rhyming alliterative poem *Three Dead Kings* 114 (‘Lykyng of flesche ... ledys youe be lagmon’). A **lagmon** was the last or hindmost man; hence ‘lead by lagman’ means ‘make a person or persons form a tail after one, to lead (him or them) on behind one at will’.
- 1730 **mydoverunder** is difficult to construe, since *under* could refer to noon as well as to the 9.00 a.m. liturgical office of Terce (see n. to *Pe* 513); in one of its few occurrences, it translates Latin *meridiem* (see *MED*).
- 1734 **purpose ... payre**: the collocation is common in *DT*: see 7053 (‘Ay puttes of the purpose that it enpaire shuld’), 9784, 11458. For **payre ... pyght**, cf. 1456.
- 1735 Cf. ‘Then he rises radly and raykes bylive’ (*Pa* 89).
- 1737 **furred ... with felles wel pured**: see n. to 154–6. In the winter the squirrel, which provided *miniver*, is grey on the back and white on the belly. The lady’s fur has been trimmed (**pured**) so as to show only the colour white. By sumptuary legislation enacted in October 1363, robes lined with white *miniver* (‘mantel ne gounne furrez de menevoir purez’) should be worn only by noblemen owning lands to the value of 400 marks a year (*Parliament Rolls* VI, 167).
- 1738–9 The lady’s headdress (which figures in the MS illustration of this scene: fol. 125^r) makes a token gesture to the convention requiring married women to cover their hair (which they

normally did by wearing a wimple). The **tressour** was a cawl of gold netting and became especially fashionable after c.1370 (Calthrop 1907: 117, 133–40). With the lady's **tressour** here, cf. that of the unmarried damsel Myldore in *Sir Degrevant*: 'With topyes [topazes] hur trechoure Overtrased that tyde' (C 651–2). Gollancz's emendation of MS *hwez* (**hues**) to *houve* [houve, cap] is often, but perhaps unnecessarily, adopted. That the lady 'had no goodly houe, but rather ...' would be uncharacteristically finger-wagging, whereas a comment to the effect that colour on her **hed** (i.e. headdress: see *MED* *hed* n¹ 1a(e)) came exclusively from gems keeps the focus on how literally radiant she looked and preserves Gawain's point of view (the perspective from which she, as all else, is seen: cf. 1760). Line 1738 is similar in construction to C 1048, where **No ... bot** might also mean 'no x other than ...', not 'not x, but rather ...'.

- 1743 Wayves up a wyndow:** cf. 'the proude quene ... Wayves up a wyndou and waytis thareout' (WA 1068–9), 'To wayven up the wicket that the woman shette' (PP B.5.602). *Waive up* means simply 'open' and does not imply that the object opens upwards; cf. **yarked up** (820) and n. to 817–21.
- 1748, 1750 droupyng ... of dreme** seems to be sleep in which unpleasing dreams occur: cf. 'Als y lay in a winters night In a droupening bifor the day, Me thought y seighe a selli sight: A bodi upon a bere lay' (*Body and Soul* 23–6), 'Sobbyng unfaire On dayes to endure, with drouping on nightes' (DT 3289–90). The verb *dravelen* had similar implications: cf. 'in swevyn ... Quen mennis myndis oft in dravillyng gronys' (Douglas, *Aeneid* X.xi.95–6; cf. XII.xiv.52).
- 1763 smothe smylyng and smolt:** this represents the only example of the survival into ME of OE **smolt** [gentle, mild, peaceful], otherwise not recorded after an occurrence of the adverb *smoltlice* [smoothly, gently] in 1150. *Smooth* is applied elsewhere to a knowing smile (cf. 1789 and n.), but seems here to mean 'sociable' or 'amicable'. For **smiten** meaning 'fall naturally, proceed without conscious effort or intention', cf. *MED* *smiten* 9(c).
- 1764 blisse and boncheif:** cf. 'Thus hath disease ... broght my blisse and my bone cheefe all bace' (Walton 13), 'Who hath goodis temporall ... In boncheif and blisse is his inhabitacion' (Idley I.686).
- 1769 Nif Mary (MS *mare*) of her knight mynne:** a common narrative intervention has here been adapted to suit Gawain's special devotion to the Virgin (see 645–50): cf. 'Si Deus n'en penst, Cum ja serra afolé' [if God does not take thought for him, he will be

destroyed] (*Gui* 10206–7), ‘Si Dieu n’en penst e Marie Magdaleine Grant guerre avunt’ [if God and Mary Magdalene do not show thought for them, they will be embroiled in a frightful war] (Fantosme, *Chronicle* 963–4). MS *mare*, which has been read as a form of *more* (Davenport 1977), is unproblematic: it reflects the scribe’s tendency to write *e* for unstressed *i* (cf. MS *mere* 153, *bode* 357).

- 1770 **prynces** (MS *prynce*) of **pris**: the MS error was probably occasioned by the common collocation of **prince** and **pris** (cf. ‘a prince full price’ at *Alexander* A 1109).
- 1771 **Nurned him so negh the thred**: the expression sounds proverbial, but no comparable idiomatic use of ‘thread’ is recorded. On *nornen*, see n. to 1669.
- 1775 **that that telde aghte** is not a mere line filler: adultery would involve a betrayal of the host–guest relationship that, from earliest times, was always held to be especially sacred.
- 1777 **layd him biside** [parried, deflected]: compare Trevisa’s use of *aside* to gloss *fraxio radii* when referring to a ray or beam of light that ‘blenschith aside’ (*Properties* I, 512, 513) or is ‘ibroke othir ischuft aside’ (I, 513), i.e. ‘is deflected’. For **specialte** = ‘particular regard’, cf. ‘For grete luf & specialte, he toke with him sir Androche’ (Mannyng, *Chronicle* I.5236–7).
- 1783–4 **folden fayth to that fre**: here and at 359, *fold to* seems to have the otherwise unattested sense of ‘hand over’. **foldes** at 499 similarly has a sense not easily paralleled, and *MED* creates a special subsection (*folden* v² 10) for the three nonce usages. Such extensions of meaning were allowed (and perhaps even admired) as metrical manoeuvres in alliterative verse. **festned ... lausen**: for the image of the knot with reference to fidelity and obligations, see 623–30, 656–65 and n. to 619–65.
- 1788 **By saynt John**: Gawain cannot deliver himself from his predicament by the simple expedient of inventing a prior commitment, since the lady has requested a faithfully truthful answer (1785–7), a request which he responds to by pledging his faith (1790) and by an oath. It has sometimes been seen as significant that the apostle John was widely known as a virgin, but the fact of the oath is more relevant than the choice of saint (which was primarily dictated by rhyming needs: the same oath is used to provide a rhyme at *Sir Amadace* 705 and *Amis* 2161, 2287): Gawain’s refusal of the lady is motivated by fear of treachery (1774–5), not by concern for his chastity, which is nowhere mentioned as weighing with him.
- 1789 **smethely con he smyle**: *smooth* and its synonym *smethe* elsewhere characterize a smile that comes as a response to some

request or comment in which the smiler has detected an error: 'The knight ... undir his helm ful smethe he lowhe. For he wyste hit scholde be wel ynowhe' (Lovelich 20563–4), 'Theos meiden ... smirkinde smetheliche yef him thullich onsware' (*Seinte Katerine* 20/356); cf. Yonge, *Secreta Secretorum* 177. The lady's question has assumed that the non-existence of a current **lemman** (1782) will imply that the situation is vacant; Gawain's smile signals detection of the error and heralds a correction (1791) which, though it is politely indirect, the lady is quick to understand (1792–3).

- 1795** The lady is not a **may** [maiden], but is taking up (perhaps with a touch of self-parody) the posture of the love-lorn **may** of the popular lyric tradition, whose language is here also echoed in the verb **mourne**, which in that context was often used with reference to frustrated love; cf. 'For hire love mournyng y make' (*Harley Lyrics* 14/85).
- 1798–1800** The request is consistent with the lady's pose as one tragically disappointed in love: see Elayne's plea to Lancelot, after he has refused her love, in the *Stanzaic Morte Arthur*: 'Sithe I of thee ne may have mare, Some thing ye wolde beleve me here, To loke on whan me longith sare' (557–9).
- 1799** **thy glove thogh** (MS *of*) **hit were**: gloves were conventional parting tokens of lovers (see e.g. CA V.7043–7). MS *of* is usually emended to *if*, but *though* (spelled *pof* at e.g. G 624) is more idiomatic (cf. C 1145–6).
- 1802** **The levest thing for thy luf**: Gawain is plainly moved by the lady's claimed resignation to broken-heartedness and speaks more warmly to her than is his wont, slipping for the one and only time into the more familiar *thou* form (a slip which he instantly corrects in the following line) which the lady has changed to at 1799–1800. The fact that the word *love* was used with possessive adjectives to mean 'sake' (*MED* *love* n¹ 1b(g)) and could also mean 'regard' (1810) allows for some interplay between these non-romantic senses in Gawain's response and the romantic sense in the lady's usage (1780, 1795).
- 1806** Gawain avoids making a compromising gift to the lady by claiming that he is travelling light on urgent business, and therefore has nothing with him worthy of her, and that he would not insult her by giving her something as worthless as the glove she has suggested (1799). The small value of a glove was proverbial; cf. the ME idioms 'not worth a glove' and 'set at a glove' (= treat as valueless).
- 1809** **no men with no males**: when travelling, gentlefolk generally had servants to attend to their luggage (cf. 1127–9).

- 1811–12 **tas to non ille Ne pine**: for ‘take to no ill’ meaning ‘please do not be offended’, cf. *C* 735; see further *MED taken* 24a.
- 1814 **lufsum under lyne** shows the influence of the popular romance tradition, in which this was one of the formulae often used to indicate a lovely lady (cf. *Sir Tristrem* 1202, 2816; *Emaré* 864; cf. also *Pe* 775 and n.).
- 1817 The ring, like the glove beforehand and the belt that is to follow, is a standard love token: cf. ‘Dame, fet il, quant vus l’amez ... Ceinture u laz u anel Enveiez li’ (Marie de France, *Eliduc* 355–8). Cf. also Andreas Capellanus, *De Amore* II.xxi: ‘A lover is permitted to receive from her partner these gifts: ... belt, ring ... always provided that in accepting the gift she is seen to be free of all suspicion of greed’ (269). On **red gold** see n. to 663.
- 1818 For *stand* = ‘shine, stand out’, cf. *Pe* 113 and see *MED standen* v¹ 10d.
- 1820 The episode of the ring establishes what the poet is at pains to emphasize: that it is not the **wele** (cf. 2037, 2432) or costliness of the lady’s gifts that weighs with Gawain when he does accept one of them.
- 1823 On **norne** see n. to 1669.
- 1825 **swer swyft by his sothe** (MS *swere swyftel his soothe*): the emendation follows T&G; cf. ‘And sayd soberly himself and by his soth sweres’ (2051).
- 1830–33 The girdle is valuable enough for covetousness to be one possible motive for Gawain’s acceptance of it and for the narrator and Green Knight to commend him for his freedom from that baser sin (see 2037–42 and 2367–8). But it is required also to be clearly less valuable than the ring – which is why and how the lady introduces it (1827–9) – not only to give some plausibility to her representation of it as an **unworthy** (1835) and **symple** and **little** thing (1847–8), but also to tempt Gawain to acceptance by removing at least one of his scruples: his reluctance to accept anything of significant value (1827–8). By the standards of fashionable girdles, therefore, which could be very sumptuous, this is represented as a modestly plainish item, **Noght bot** [merely] trimmed all round with some tastefully simple gold ornamentation (1833), and there is no equivalent to the comment at 1820 as to the evident value of the splendid ring. It is the **clere mantyle** that catches the eye with its gorgeousness, and the girdle (worn underneath it over the **kyrtel**: 1831) is evidently not meant to compete with it in splendour.
- 1830 **lyghtly** has normally been assumed to represent the adverb *lightly*, but the syntactic and metrical placing is anomalous for an unemphatic adverb, and we have assumed the word is the same

adjective as the one applied to the **uryssoun** at 608 and means ‘made of light material’, which is the gloss given **lyghtly** at 608 in *MED* (though the word is not otherwise recorded in that sense). Belts of silk (cf. 589) were luxury items associated with the prosperous: the princess Phillis has a ‘Ceinte of selk’ (*CA* 4.857), and ‘a russeyt silke gridyll with gilt harnas [trim]’ was valuable enough to merit itemization as a bequest (*Lincoln Diocese* 50); the girdle in *Sir Gawain* is of **grene silk** with **golde** ‘harnas’ (the colours of the Green Knight: cf. 167). T&G note that **schaped** (1832) derives not from ME *shapen*, but from *chapen* (‘mount with precious metal’), and cite Chaucer, ‘Hir knyves were chaped ... al with silver’ (*CT* I.366).

1833 **brayden** and **beten** both refer to the ‘inlaid’ or ‘in-stitched’ **golde**; fancy embroidery was associated with well-born women (cf. 609–14), and **with fynGRES** probably indicates the long, slender fingers associated with ladies: cf. ‘And ye lovely ladies with youre longe fynGRES, That ye have silk and sandel to sowe whan tyme is Chesibles for chapeleyns ...’ (*PP* B.6.10–12).

1837 **gold ne garyssoun**: cf. 1255.

1840b MS for *I baybe hit yow neuer* yields a b-verse with two long dips. Duggan 1986 suggested removing *for*, but *for* explains the imperative of the a-verse as an attempt to save the lady from wasted effort, and so renders the categorical assertion of the b-verse less curt and rude. It is therefore preferable to regularize the metre by removal of either *hit* or *yow*.

1851–4 The Emir’s daughter in *Sir Ferumbas* has a magic girdle that wards off harm (2387–96). And a love token (most commonly a ring) given by the lady to protect the hero is a common motif in romance (Putter 1996: 142–3).

1853 **hathel under heven**: cf. ‘hathill vndir heuen’ (*WA* 84).

1855 **and him com to herte**: MS & *hit come to his hert* results (as at 1840) in a b-verse with two long dips.

1856 The girdle will act as a **juel** in its apotropaic power to ward off evil, which many jewels were believed to do (see n. to *Pe* 14–16). Since the word could be used of any valuable object (see *MED* *jeuel* 1; cf. *C* 1441, 1495), including a girdle embellished with gold (as at Douglas, *Aeneid* IX.vi.139), it is not simply a metaphor here. But the girdle, a relatively humble *jewel* (1829, 1847–8), suddenly acquires for Gawain a value above that of the more costly jewel (the ring) he had rejected, so that, in context, the material sense of the word is being played against its looser metaphorical one (‘what is greatly prized’: see *MED* *jeuel* 2); a similar play on the literal and extended senses of **juel** occurs at *Pe* 277–8. **joparde** (< OF *jeu parti* = critical position) originally

referred to a chess problem (Rendall 1992), and the word **chek** [plight, turn of affairs: 1857] involves an underlying analogy with a move that leaves a chess-player in a difficult position.

1858 Cf. Jason's talismanic ring in *DT* 787–8: 'And if it borne were in batell on his bare flessche, He schulde slyde forth slegly and unslayn worthe.'

1860 **ho bere on him the belt**: cf. 'Thou beodest us thi joye ... And berest hit on us stifliche, al withouten asking' (*Talkyng of the Loue of God* 4).

1861 The moment of weakness in which Gawain accepts the girdle occurs almost imperceptibly in the one verb (**granted**) of which he is the grammatical subject amid a sequence of verbs of which the lady is the subject (**bere, bede, gave, bisoght**). After **he granted** there occurs an unannounced subject change to the lady either at **gave** or at **bisoght** (1862), where she is certainly the subject. But Morris's insertion of *ho* (before **him gave**) is probably unnecessary: for comparable abrupt changes of subject that are not announced by pronoun, see 2071–4. Other editors assume that the subject change occurs with **bisoght**, and that **he** is the subject both of **granted** and of **him gave**, but 'give oneself in the sense required does not otherwise occur without *to* + *noun*, and elision of pronoun subject (and of pronoun object *it*) assumes less anomalous usage than does interpreting **he ... him gave** as meaning 'he conceded' – especially since **with a good wille** is also more unproblematically read as referring to the gift by the lady (cf. 1860) than to the acceptance by Gawain, whose feelings must be complicated.

1863 **lelly layne** is a potential oxymoron which registers the awkwardness of Gawain's situation: loyalty to the lady must now entail disloyalty to the host (to whom the girdle should be returned under the terms of the exchange of winnings) and reflects the lady's success in shifting the issue of truth from that owed to another man to that owed to a woman (cf. 1513, 1516, 1782–7). The collocation is repeated in a similar moral situation when the guide offers to hush up the escape he recommends (see 2124, 2128).

1868 **thrynne**: see n. to *C* 1727.

1870 **laches ... leve ... leves**: cf. 'Laughte leue at that lord, leften his sygne' (*SJ* 283), 'Then leuyt thai the lond and no leue toke' (*DT* 986).

1871 **more mirthe of that man myght ho not gete**: editors generally do not make it clear how they understand this line. According to *MED*, sv *mirth(e* 1(b), 'get mirth of' here means 'be happy in the company of, obtain happiness from'. But there seems

no reason not to treat the line as having the same force as modern English ‘She could get no more joy out of him than that’; here and elsewhere (see n. to 1880–84) the poet underplays the significance of Gawain’s acceptance of the girdle, which is not at this point signalled as a moral lapse.

- 1875 there he hit eft fonde:** the expression is used of objects a traveller intends to take with him when he leaves; cf. the footshackle and inscribed tablet Gregorius stores away among the floor rushes in the hut where he spends the night – not, in his case, to hide them, but so that they may lie safe and ready to be retrieved: ‘daz er si vunde morgen vruo’ [so that he might find them straight away the following day] (Hartmann, *Gregorius* 3046).
- 1878 lysten his lif** adapts Burrow’s suggested emendation (1965: 105) of MS *lyfte his lif* to *lyste his lif*, interpreted as an alliterative variation on the idiom *heren lif* (‘hear confession’) as found in e.g. CA V.1789 (cf. I.2447). **lysten** preserves the long dip normally found between the staves in the a-verse and is consistent with the poet’s use elsewhere of *list(e)nen* (uninflected infinitive *listen*) rather than *listen* (uninflected infinitive *list*). **leren:** b-verse metre requires emendation of MS *lern* to either *lerne(n)* (< OE *leornian*) or *leren* (< OE *læran*); although *lernen* can in ME mean ‘teach’, this poet does elsewhere observe the original distinction between OE *leornian* (‘learn’) and *læran* (‘teach’: cf. C 843).
- 1879 seye hethen**, ‘go hence’ – from the castle, but also from this world, for the two have become much the same for Gawain. The wording is thus subtler than would be *seye of live* (WA 716, 4462), of which **seye hethen** is a variant.
- 1880–84** Critics have speculated much about the ‘validity’ of this confession, since the girdle apparently does not figure among the sins for which Gawain receives absolution. In fact, prior to the Green Knight’s own reference to Gawain’s retention of the girdle as his one lapse (2356–68), the narrative appears quite unembarrassed in its own two references to Gawain’s possession of it, recording without condemnation his hiding of it (1875), treating it as a matter apparently not relevant to his confession (which Gawain, believing he might die the next day, would make as a matter of course), and referring to it in an equally unembarrassed and even exculpatory manner when Gawain dons it the next day (2030–42). The reader is encouraged, in fact, to go into a denial similar to that which Gawain must be undergoing, so that the conscious recognition of the wrongdoing comes to the audience only as and when it comes to the hero.
- 1880 schrof him schyrly:** cf. ‘To schryve yow full shirle, and schewe

yow to prestis' (P3A T 646).

- 1881 the more and the mynne:** **mynne** is an ON loan word that occurs only in this alliterative formula (modelled on ON *meiri ok minni*, i.e. 'of all kinds'). For the application to sins, cf. 'We schal acounte for more & mynn, Syn judicare come in crede' ('For thiself' 387).
- 1884** The hypothetical clause is grimly appropriate: though an actual sense of 'day of death' is not recorded for *Doomsday* in *MED*, Gawain expects the next day to face 'the dome of [his] wyrdes' (1968) and does indeed face judgement from a lord who 'like power divine Hath looked upon [his] passes' (*Measure for Measure* V.i.361–2).
- 1886** On **caroles** see footgloss to **43** and n. to **473**.
- 1889–90 had daynte ... Of:** a well-attested idiom meaning 'to value highly'; cf. 'Lyke as folkis of relykis have deynte, Theron they set a valew or a pryce' (Lydgate, *Aesop* 176–7).
- 1893** On the three-line-deep initial capital, see n. to **619–65**.
- 1895 forfaren** could represent the common verb *forfare* = 'destroy', but that would produce an uncharacteristic anticipation in a poem that normally adheres strictly to chronological sequence. It appears, therefore, as *MED* assumes, to be a separate verb, found both in OE and in the early ME of Layamon, whose *Brut* (13662) is cited sv *forfaren* v², 'To intercept or head off; to block or bar (the way)', a sense for which *MED* also cites *WP* 2762 ('As folk that were fayn to forfare that best'), where the reference is likewise to a hunt (though the verb there is interpreted as 'destroy' by the poem's most recent editor). A gloss of 'got ahead of in order to block its course' for **forfaren** in *Sir Gawain* avoids anticipating the actual interception of the fox, which has yet to come in sight.
- 1896, 1898 spenne, greve:** see n. to **1709**.
- 1900 The wye was ware of the wylde:** cf. 1586 and n.
- 1901 braydes out the bryght bronde:** cf. 1584.
- 1902** Cf. 'Bot the schalke for the scharpe he schownttes a littille' (*MA* 3842).
- 1909, 1913–14** Cf. 1601–3 and n. to 1601.
- 1918 rewarde** (see n. to **1610**): cf. 'And if he [the fox] be take, y schall reward myn houndez with brede' (Twiti 54).
- 1923 Strakande:** see n. to **1364**.
- 1925 fire upon flet:** see n. to **832–3**.
- 1928 blue:** as Burrow notes, Gawain wears blue, the colour of faithfulness, for his single act of duplicity. The colour (which, unlike the thematically recurrent ones of red, gold and green, occurs only once) was, however, probably at least in part

prompted by the demands of the alliterative metre: cf. WA 5039 (where the *bleant* = 'cloth': see n. to 879–81): 'A blewe bleant obofe brad him al ovire.'

- 1931 For **Blende** (regularized from MS *blande*) referring to the addition of some luxurious material or ornament, cf. 'Bricht braissaris of steill ... Blandit with beriallis and cristallis cler' (*Rauf Coilyear* 471–2). On **blaunner**, see n. to 154–6.
- 1934 On the previous two occasions the lord had initiated the exchange. Gawain is plainly anxious to get the ceremony over and done with.
- 1937 **saverly**: for the application to a kiss, cf. 'he kist hir naked ers Ful savourly, er he were war of this' (*CT* I.3734–5).
- 1939 The lord is, as before (1393–4), enquiring with jesting slyness into the history of the kisses, and Gawain again (cf. 1395–7) brushes aside the implied question. The expression *god chep* [a good bargain] is well attested, the plural **chepes**, ensuring the unstressed syllable required at line ending, being *metri causa*. The terms **chaffer** and **chevisaunce** (used also at 1390 and 1647) likewise had market senses as well as more general ones; cf. *PP* C.6.252 (where Covetousness is describing his underhand dealing): 'That chaffared with my chevesaunces cheued selde aftur'. See further Mann 1986.
- 1945 **ful pore**: the fur of the fox (used as lining and trimming by the lower orders) was considered to be inferior in the Middle Ages.
- 1952 **With mirth and mynstralsye**: cf. 'ther was murthe and mynstralcie Mede to plesse' (*PP* B.3.11). In *Sir Gawain*, as in other courtly literature of the period, 'minstrel' no longer refers to a storyteller but rather to a professional musician.
- 1953 Cf. 'And made hem as meri as ani men couthe' (*William* 1409).
- 1960 This bedtime parting is also the final leave-taking. Like the guests who left before him, Gawain is to depart early in the morning and so takes leave from his host before going to bed (cf. 1027).
- 1961–3 **he him thonkes Of such a sellyly sojourn ... the High-Kyng yow yelde**: the absence of inverted commas in medieval script means that the boundary between indirect and direct speech is more fluid, and the transition from the one to the other is virtually imperceptible here: **Of such** [for such] **a sellyly sojourn** seems syntactically *apo koinou* [belonging equally] with **he him thonkes** and **the High-Kyng yow yelde**.
- 1962 **sellyly** is emended to *selly* by most modern editors, but unnecessarily so. OE had the adjective *sæliglic* [happy] as well as *sæglic*, and both survived into ME (see *MED* sv *seli* and *selili*). The b-verse alliterates on *s* by virtue of linking alliteration in **as I**.

- 1963 **High-Kyng**, as at 1038, C 50 and *Pe* 596, is from the OE compound *heahcyning* (see Putter et al. 2007: 175); the final *e* in the MS on *high* does not therefore in these instances represent a sounded syllable.
- 1964 T&G regard the line as ‘corrupt’, and Burrow glosses ‘I shall give myself in exchange for one of your men, if it please you’. But the most obvious sense is ‘I offer myself to you as one of your servants’ (i.e. *for* = ‘as’: cf. C 1163). The offer was a polite expression of obligation; cf. 975–6 (‘and he hit quik askes To be her servant sothly, if hemself liked’), where the expression **if -self like-** likewise also occurs (implying a modestly courteous refusal to take for granted the acceptability of the service offered).
- 1967–8 Other editors gloss **dele** ‘receive’, but in collocation with **God** and **wyrd-** the sense is always elsewhere ‘assign’ (cf. 1752, 2418): e.g. ‘God may rycht weill oure werdys dele’ (Barbour, *Bruce* XVIII.46). We have assumed the infinitive **To dele** has here that meaning, but in the passive sense (i.e. ‘to be assigned’) which the infinitive often had after verbs of causing or permitting, including **suffer** (for examples, see *MED sufferen* 8b(b)).
- 1971–2 Hosts regularly *convey* [escort] and **coundue** [guide] their guests on their way (cf. ‘por ax conduire e convoier’: *Erec* 4270), usually in person.
- 1980–81 On **thryvande thonkkes**, see n. to 1080. **thrat** [compelled] conveys the social mock ‘battle’ that occurs in the case of compliments and thanks, which must be pressed on those who are reluctant to receive them and who **yelden him ayain yeply that ilke**, i.e. return them with the same energetic alacrity as they would missiles, in reference to which the same alliterative collocations occur at WA 1516 (‘And thai yapely ayayne yildis tham swythe’).
- 1996–7 constitute a direct address to the audience (cf. *Pa* 59) beautifully attuned to the dramatic situation, as the unusual repetition of the rhyme word **stille** highlights: the audience are asked to be **stille** [quiet], partly so as not to disturb Gawain (**Let him lye there stille**: 1994) over a night when sleep will in any case be difficult enough (1991–3), and the rhyme unites hero and audience in different kinds of suspenseful anticipation of the coming narrative climax. Since **stille**¹ is adverb and **stille**² plural adjective, the rhyme qualifies as *rime riche* (a play on homophones or different parts of speech or different senses), which was permitted as an artful sophistication, rather than as self-rhyme pure and simple, which was, naturally, avoided.
- 1999 **The day drives to the derk** is a little puzzling, as the expression elsewhere indicates the daylight giving way to the

night: cf. 'When the son is ... drevyn to the derke & the day fynyst' (WA 686–7), 'or this dredfull day was drif to nyght' (*Song of Roland* 1024). A scribe may have normalized an original 'The derk drives to the day' (i.e. 'the night gives way to the day') to the more familiar form of the expression ('the day *drives to* [gives way to] the dark'). **the Dryhtyn** (MS *Dryhtyn*): we have inserted 'the' to provide the b-verse with its long dip, as the poet himself does elsewhere for precisely that purpose (cf. C 669, 1007).

2000 wederes of the worlde: for 'of the worlde' referring to the laws of the natural world, and specifically to the weather it brings, see 504 and 530.

2002 the naked (= bare flesh): this example of adjective for substantive (a usage common in alliterative verse) occurs also at WA 4311: 'And quare it neghes on the nakid, it noyis for euire.'

2003 snitered (probably related to ON *snitra* [shiver with cold]) occurs only here and in a closely comparable line in *Awntyrs* 82: 'For the sneterand snawe that snaypped hem snell'. For **snaype**-used of snow, cf. 'the snyband snawe' at Douglas, *Aeneid* VII.Prol.50.

2009 ere the day sprenged: see n. to 1415.

2011–14 chamberlayn: the pronunciation with initial *k* required here reflects the alternation between *ch* and *k* in different varieties of OF which could be exploited in alliterative verse. Woolgar 1999: 42 notes that the chamberlain's duties, with regard to assistance in dressing, 'may have expanded during the fourteenth century'.

2018 rokked of the roust: armour was burnished by rolling it back and forth in a barrel of sand. The *Early Rolls of Merton College* mention a 'barillum in quo arma debent mundari' [a barrel in which arms should be cleansed] (Bennett 1974: 8). Cf. Layamon C 11122: 'heo ruokeden burnen (O: hii rollede wepne)'.

2023 into Grece: cf. 'No gladder gome hethen into Grece' (*Pe* 231). Greece, often used loosely for the Byzantine Empire (see Suger 44), marked the limit of the Christian world.

2025 wedes ... warp on: cf. 'warpe of his wedes' (*MA* 901).

2027 vertuuous stones: jewels were believed to have protective powers (see n. to *Pe* 14–16).

2028 For **semes** meaning 'stitchwork' (not 'seams'), 'embroidery', see n. to 610.

2030–42 See n. to 1880–84.

2036 ryal red clothe ... rich: cf. 663 and n.

2037–42 See nn. to 1820, 1830–33 and 1880–84.

2038–9 Cf. 'Ane ... belt ... The pendentis wrocht of burnyst gold maste fyne' (Douglas, *Aeneid* IX.vi.125–6).

- 2041–2 of **bronde him to were Or knyve**: A&W (followed by Burrow) construe ‘to defend himself from sword or knife’, and refer to 384, where Gawain gives the Green Knight a choice of weapons. But the reference is surely to Gawain’s being denied, by the terms of the game, the use of the weapons with which he would normally defend himself (cf. 1754): the sword and the dagger are the two standard weapons of the knight, as is shown both in monumental effigies of the period and in ME romances: ‘Wyth swerd and with knyef ... y schall faythly fyeght’ (*Sir Degrevant* C 555–6; cf. *Sege of Melayne* 1064–88).
- 2043 For **boun** [ready] meaning ‘armed’, see *MED boun* 1(a).
- 2045 **meyny of renoun**: for **renoun** meaning ‘worth, excellence’, see n. to *Pe* 1182.
- 2048 For the application of *sojourn* to the time spent by a dog or horse in a kennel or stable, see *MED sojournen* (g). Similar comments about the horse are made in contexts of hospitality in OF romance (cf. ‘Il est ben sojornez e bels’: *Protheselaus* 5171), in which *bons chevaux/destriers sejournez* was a standard phrase to indicate horses in good condition. The word here suggests that the horse has enjoyed the same comfortable hostelry as has his master (cf. 1962, 2409).
- 2052–9 Yder, having enjoyed *bon hostel*, similarly calls down a blessing on his host and his wife (‘Beneit sei ...’) and hopes to be able to repay them (*Yder* 804–11). Such a hope is frequently followed by the rider ‘If I live’ (as in *G* 2058–9), for adventuring knights knew they might not: cf. (said to a host) ‘Se vivre puz, sachez de fi Uncor vus ert il ben meri’ [if I may live, know in faith that you will be rewarded in future] (*Ipomedon* 6611–12; cf. ‘s’il vit longement’ at Vulgate *Merlin* 236).
- 2055–6 Line 2055 is evidently corrupt: the a-verse is defective and the line ending unmetrical. *Cherish* had a social application to favours, attentions and protection extended (by hosts, lords, etc) to those in a dependent position: cf. 946, *C* 543, 1644, and see *MED cherishen* 4(a); and the metaphor in **holden honour in her hande** may derive from taking a guest by the hand as a sign of respectful patronage (see n. to 947): the lord and lady befriend honour, ‘cherish’ it as they do their guest (2055). Cf. *Cursor C* 2429–32: ‘The king ... commaunded ... Men suld him mensk [honour] and hald in hand’ (i.e. give him special favour and protection, as if taking a guest by the hand).
- 2060 Cf. ‘He sterte tille his sterope and strides one lofte’ (*MA* 916), and for *stride* = ‘mount’, see *MED striden* 2(a).
- 2061 **schewed him his schelde**: cf. 619 and n.
- 2073 Three valedictions are compressed in this line: ‘I commend you

to God', 'I wish you good day' and 'God save you'. Cf. 'Wid the king he yede away, And gaf thaim god and goday' (*Cursor G* 8067–8).

2075 tene place: see n. to **1707**.

2076 resayve schulde (MS *schulde resayve*): where metre requires stress on the prefix of verbs occurring with auxiliaries, the poet regularly puts the main verb first: cf. **devayed were** at 1493 and **renayed habbe** and **renayed hade** at C 105 and *Pa* 344.

2079 uphalt is assumed in *MED* to be from the verb *uphalen* [pull up], recorded elsewhere only twice (with reference to drawing a bow and pulling up a root). As applied to the **heven**, it is difficult to see what it could mean other than that the sky was cloudless or the clouds not low-lying; the visible cloak of mist around the hills (2081) would scarcely be apparent except against a relatively clear background.

2081 hake occurs elsewhere only of a bird's plumage or animal's fur, except in the compound *messe-heke* [priest's vestment], with which **mist-hake** (attested only here) is obviously analogous. A **hatte** was often worn over the hood. The comparison is with a figure whose form and features are obscured by the outer garments in which he is wrapped against the cold.

2084 Welawylle: cf. **Welawynne** (518) and **Welawynnely** (C 831). Most recent editors construe **Wela** in all three instances as an adverb meaning 'very'. We follow earlier editors and treat it as a prefix. It occurs in this corpus only at line-initial position and before a *w*- adjective or adverb. Since the latter is also true of its other two occurrences ('waella wel' at C 6390 in *Layamon*, and 'wella wide' at *WA* 2096), it seems to act in alliterative verse as an alliterating prefix.

2091ff As in the exchange with the porter (811–14), the pronouns reflect the relative ranks of the interlocutors: the social inferior addresses the knight with the polite (plural) form **ye**, while the knight uses to him (2127ff) the informal (singular) **thou** form. When Gawain refuses, with an implied rebuke, to take his advice, the guide, in a display of huffiness, switches to the non-reverential **thou** forms (2140–51).

2093 spied and spured so specially after: cf. 'Aspieth nou specialy the yates ben sperde' (*Pistel of Susan* 122), 'And speryt syne specially' (Barbour, *Bruce* IV.467). For the expression 'spie and spyre' [look and ask] (cf. *G* 901), cf. *PP* C.3.104, *Ywain and Gawain* 3013, *Towneley Plays* 11.115–16.

2099 is stif and sturne should perhaps be emended to 'stif is and sturne', which would restore the inter-stress long dip that normally occurs in *a*-verses and would be in accord with the

separation of coordinate adjectives by which that metrical end is elsewhere achieved (e.g. 583, 1763): cf. ‘a stif man and a stern’ (*William* 3378).

2102 Hestor refers not to Hector of Troy, as T&G and A&W assume, but to Hector de la Mare, for the guide is thinking of the most pre-eminent knights **in Arthures house**. Hector plays a leading role in the *Lancelot*, where his pre-eminence is made explicit in a passage (V, 314) in which King Arthur distributes robes to his Round Table knights in order of merit. Hector comes second (after Bohort but before Gawain), in the absence of Lancelot (and Kay).

2108 Monk other masseprest: for the collocation, which distinguishes between the enclosed and the secular clergy, cf. ‘Vt wenden munekes & tha massepreostes’ (Layamon 14908).

2110 yow (MS *þe*): see n. to **2091ff**

2111 may the knight rede: for **rede** = ‘carry out one’s intentions’, see *MED* *reden* v¹ 13(c); (*and/if*) ... *may* ... *rede* means ‘if he has his way’; cf. ‘I shall revenge thy hurte and I may aryght rede’ (Malory 222; cf. *Sir Degrevant* 232).

2118–31 As noted by Rigby 1983, the guide’s warning to Gawain closely resembles a passage from the *Lancelot*, where a squire warns Galeshin, Duke of Clarence, not to continue along the *chemin de diable* that leads past Morgan le Fay’s Chapel, but to take a safer route instead. When Clarence refuses – ‘je seroie ains tenus por recreant et por faillis’ [I would be considered a recreant and coward] – the squire makes the same tempting offer as Gawain’s guide: ‘“Oh, sir,” said the squire, “I will swear straight away on the saints of this chapel that never, on my account, any man or women will know of it.” “I know well,” said the duke, “that you would not lightly do something through which you thought I might have shame. But even if you would not reveal it, I would, since I am bound to speak the truth” ’ (*Lancelot* (M) XXI.274; our translation).

2120 there Cryst mot yow spede: **there** is poised (as at 1893) between its use as a particle introducing a wish (cf. e.g. 839) and as the relative adverb (= where), the latter implying that Gawain will need to be somewhere else before God can protect him. An important element in the guide’s tempting of Gawain to flight is his representation of the Green Knight as a devilish force (attacking priests), evasion of which is aligned with Christ (2120) and the Christian faith (2122–3).

2123 As help me God and the halydam: oaths were not uncommonly made upon the holy objects of specific churches, but in the formula found here the reference is to sacred things in

general; cf. ‘Sworen “Goddess soule ...” and “So helpe me God and halidome” ... nyne hundred tymes’ (PP B.5.370–71).

2124 lelly yow layne: see n. to **1863. lause:** see nn. to **526** and **Pa 350**.

2132–5 Gawain’s words echo Galeshin’s resolve to continue to the *chapele Morgain* (see n. to **2118–31**): ‘Coment qu’il aveigne, fet li dux, del achever ou del faillir, aler i vueil’ [‘Whatever may happen,’ said the duke, ‘whether it is success or failure, I wish to go there’] (*Lancelot* (M) XXI.272).

2132 chose has been supplied. There are too many *xaax* and *axax* lines to justify emendation of any one of them on those grounds alone, but in this case a recurrence of the collocation of 451 (‘To the Grene Chapel thou chose’) seems not unlikely.

2136 knape: the word, though often used casually and informally (‘chap’), implied low menial status (cf. ‘Me thinkit I go lyk no knape, For I bere a baselard’: ‘Lestenit Lordynges’ 15–16), and is consistent with **stave** (**2137**), a churl’s weapon as opposed to the chivalric sword, and **dynges** [beats, hammers] at 2105. Gawain knows it will be a blade that will be used against him, but is deconstructing the guide’s implication (2104–9) of an unknighly and godless opponent (whom it would be right for a Christian to shun): a knight serving God is not defenceless against a thug.

2140ff On the **thou** forms here, see n. to **2091ff**.

2143 helme and **spere** would normally be carried by his squire and handed to the knight at need. The guide has plainly been acting as a squire in this respect, and here brings his borrowed office to a curt close.

2151 not on fote ferre: MS *on fote ferre* gives a b-verse without a long dip. Emendation to *one* is counterindicated: a distinction is elsewhere consistently observed between the numeral adjective *on* [one], which appears as *one* only when weak, and the adverb *one* [alone]. But **not** can occur in this context: cf. ‘Not a fote fro him fled’ (*Cursor* T 13859). The formulation owes something to the squire’s refusal to follow Galeshin to the *chapele Morgain* (see n. to **2118–31**): ‘Je ne vos sievrai ja plain pas’ [I will not follow you even by one whole step] (*Lancelot* (M) XXI.273).

2159 tone: the poet’s normal form is *taken/tan*. In his n. to *Pearl* 513 (where **tos** (for *tas*) similarly occurs as a rhyming expedient) Gordon suggests we may be dealing with artificial forms created by the poet (in whose dialect northern *a* alternated with southern *o* to produce pairs such as *home/hame*, *brode/brade*); but **to-** forms are not uncommon in poetry from the north and North Midlands (see e.g. Purdie 2008, 159, 177, 179).

2166–7 knokle- (a joint of the body) does not occur elsewhere, as

noun or verb, in metaphorical application; 2167 is characterized by ON loan words (see p. 249), among which **scowtes** and **skayned** occur only here.

2169 oft chaunged his chere: cf. 711 and n.

2171–3 The topography of the Chapel is very precisely indicated, both here and at 2144–7, lines which are mutually confirmatory. It lies at the bottom of a major valley: only in connection with the Green Chapel is **valay(e)** (as opposed to *vale*) used (2145, 2245), and **brem valaye** at 2145 seems to mean ‘large valley’ (see *MED brem(e adj 1(b))*). It is situated on a **launde** [clearing] at the valley bottom (2146, 2171) and seems to consist simply of a mound: **lawe** and **berwe** both derive in fact from OE words (*hlaw*, *beorg*) for a grave mound and perhaps suggest a dark-age tumulus. This mound stands by a slope bordering the river (**the brymme biside**) down which runs **a flod** or tributary stream – a stream whose presence is consistent with the grinding Gawain hears (2199–2204), since water was generally necessary to this operation. The scene has been identified with several actual locations, including the rock cleft known as Lud’s Church in the Peak District (Elliott 1984: 44–5).

2176–7 Lyghtes doun luflyly: cf. 1583: ‘He lyghtes luflyche adoun.’ **taches** is from OF *atacher*, the verb regularly used when a knight temporarily tethers his horse (often to a tree or branch: see Vulgate *Merlin* 379, *Livre d’Artus* 297); but the MS reading at 2177a (‘þe rayne & his riche’) gives awkward sense (*riche* would have to mean ‘noble [steed]’), and we follow Gollancz in emending *his riche* to **hit riched**; the collocation of *rein* and *richen* occurs several times in *DT*: see 1231, 2370, 6693, 6767 (‘Raght to the reynes, ricchit hom belive’).

2188 matynes was the first of the daily cycle of services (the canonical hours). The sinister cave is a diabolical inversion of a ‘chapel’: an **oritore** (2190) where the devil might perform this midnight office.

2189 wysty: associated with the ruined, the godless and people-less. Cf. ‘Tu ... schalt granin godless inwith westi wahes’ [you ... shall groan without goods within desolate halls] (*Hali Meithhad* 23), ‘Leode nere thar nane ... buten westiye paethes’ [there were no people there ... nothing apart from desolate paths] (Layamon C 561–2). It is consistent with the conspicuous conflation of social and Christian values in this poem that Gawain should have so strong a sense of the devilish (2187–8, 2191–6) in this desolate place in which the Chapel takes the form of a non-building. That he nevertheless stays is a tribute to his courage: the presence of satanic forces constituted the one occasion on which a knight

would feel it right to flee.

2191 wye wruxled in grene: a periphrasis which perhaps, in this context, associates the Green Knight with the devil, who traditionally wears green (cf. *CT* III.1382 and see Brewer 1997). On **wruxled**, see n. to **C 1381**: the word occurs elsewhere only there.

2192 Deles (MS *deuele3*): the metre requires the shortened form (cf. 2188).

2197 high helme: see **607** and n.

2198 wones: for the plural as a metrical expedient, see n. to **1051**.

2199–2200 The provenance of the sound is precisely indicated, and is consistent with the topographical information already given (see n. to **2171–3**). **that highe hille** must be the **bonk** by which the Chapel is situated (2172), and the **brok** is the tributary **flood** running down beside it (2173). The whetting takes place **Byonde the brok**, i.e. on the other side of the stream from that on which the Chapel stands: so the knight must cross the water to reach the side of it on which Gawain stands (2231–2). The water is relevant to the grinding noise (see n. to **2171–3**), as is the crevice of bare rock (**in a hard roche**) within which the process takes place and which would thus add a metallic echo to the ominous sound. The Green Knight is in a cleft or cave of bare rock, as is indicated by the **hole** from which he emerges at 2221, and by the word **roche**, which here does not mean ‘rock’ (A&W, T&G), but ‘fissure, cave’ (*MED roche* n² 1(c)), as in *St Robert* 168 (‘And in a roche closed him in a cave’) and in *Sir Orfeo* 349, where it forms an entry into the Fairy World (‘In at a roche the levedis rideth’).

2201 Cf. the simile at 1722: ‘As all the clamberande clyffes had clatered on hepes.’

2203–4 wharred occurs only here; **whette** and **rusched** meaning ‘made a whetting noise’ and ‘made a rushing sound’ are also unique usages, called into play by the precise context of a sound being interpreted.

2206–7 The MS reads *Is ryched at þe reuerence me renk to mete bi rote*. This is generally left unemended and interpreted to give roughly the same sense as in our footgloss. But 2206 requires emendation on the grounds of both intelligibility and metre (the b-verse has no long dip). **reuerence** in the sense of ‘(in) honour of ...’ (*MED reverence* 1(e)) was normally either followed by *of* + *noun*/*pronoun* or preceded by a possessive pronoun (e.g. ‘in thy reverence’: *CT* VII.473). We have emended accordingly, and have assumed *renk* to be an error for **reken**, which is used adverbially (‘fittingly’) and in collocation with **reuerence** at *C* 10 (‘Reken

with reverence thay richen His auter'; cf. *G* 251). **By rote** is usually assumed to mean 'in due form, with ceremony', though *MED* cites no parallel for such a sense of the expression. Gawain's comment in these lines is presumably ironic, though Burrow assumes non-irony and translates (without emending) 'That equipment, I believe, is being prepared in honour of meeting me, a knight, in customary fashion' (i.e. with a blade of some sort).

2223 Denes axe: a broad-bladed battleaxe used by the Vikings.

2224 On the axe, see [210–15](#) and n. The MS has illustrations of both these axes (folios 94^v and 129^v): both show a blade whose long cutting edge forms a convex curve (the 'barb' shape referred to at 2310).

2225 foure fote large: the axe is recognizably the same kind of weapon as the one the Green Knight had brought to Camelot (208–220), on which occasion the blade was described as being as long as an ell-yard (about 45in/115cm). **fylor** occurs only once elsewhere, and it is not clear what kind of sharpening device should be visualized; the preposition **in** suggests a hone with a groove of some kind.

2226 by that lace is interpreted in T&G as a reference to a thong bound round the axe-handle. The first axe had such a thong (217–20), but none has been mentioned in connecton with this one, and the **lace** that does have a (prominent) recent pre-existence in the narrative (as **that lace** implies) is the girdle, to which the relative clause **that lemed ful bryghte** is certainly more appropriate (cf. 1832, 2038–9). It is also poetically appropriate that the girdle, which Gawain accepts as a protective charm, can only serve, when the moment comes, to measure the width of that axe-blade.

2240 Cf. Arthur's greeting to the Green Knight: 'Wye, welcom iwysse to this place' (252). The Green Knight is giving an ironic welcome to what is referred to ironically as a **place** (= mansion; see [Glossary](#)).

2241 true is disyllabic, as b-verse metre requires and as is reflected in the MS spelling *truee* (< OE *treowe*).

2246 rele: for the verb as used of hand-to-hand fighting, see *MED* *relen* v¹ (d). It is here presumably meant as a joky word, since the situation is not that of a scuffle, the b-verse being ironic in its entirety ('we can scrap to our hearts' content').

2247 Since his **helme** has an **aventayle** (608) attached to its base to protect the neck against decapitating strokes (see n. to [607–11](#)), Gawain must remove the helmet to receive the beheading stroke.

2249 wypped of my hed: cf. 'wyth that strok A wypede of his heved' (*Ferumbras* 1616–17), 'The hed of oon he can wype' (*Guy of*

Warwick (2) 2906).

2258 For the collocation of **drede** and **dare**, cf. 315 and see n. to *Pa* 372.

2259 This is the last of the lines rubricated by a three-line-deep initial capital: cf. 619 (and n.), 763, 1421, 1893.

2267 **scharp yrne**: cf. ‘oftener is hunger cause of victorie than the sharp yren’ (Vegetius 127). *Iren* was commonly used to designate a weapon (*MED iren* n 3(a)).

2268 **schunt** occurs only here as a noun, though the verb (cf. 1902, 2280) is well attested.

2272 **fles for ferde**: **fles** is given the otherwise unattested sense ‘flinch’ by many editors and in *MED* sv *flen* 5, but this is to miss the point of the comic overstatement. The Green Knight is *treating* Gawain’s flinch as if it were an instance of the ‘flight’ and **cowardise** (2273) that a knight should never show. The accusation is comically unfair, as was the charge of cowardice he had levelled at the Round Table (315) when no one took up his baffling offer.

2273 **couth** [did] is strictly speaking the past tense of ‘can’, but since northern *can/con* also did duty for *gan* ‘proceeded to, did’, *couth* came to be used in northern dialects also for the past tense of *ginnen* (see *OED* sv *can* v² 2c).

2286–7 This is not a macabre joke, but a reference to something Gawain from the start of the interview insists on: that he is bound to accept in **stille-ness** (2293) *one* stroke only (2252, cf. 2327–30) and will consider himself free to take defensive action against further blows.

2288 **Haf at thee**: for this call of warning and defiance, cf. ‘Have at thee, Jason! Now thyn horn is blowe [your true nature will be made known]’ (Chaucer, *Legend of Good Women* 1383).

2290 **rynes** probably here means ‘cuts’. Though its base sense ‘touch’ would make acceptable sense here, it was, in the context of wounds and weapons, used in OE to mean ‘give a severe gash’ (see *Beowulf* 2976) and could mean ‘strike’ or ‘pierce’ in ME.

2293 The double simile reflects the traditional alliterative coupling of *stock/stub* [tree trunk] and *stone* [rock]; cf. ‘stub nor ston’ (*Sir Orfeo* 346), ‘by stok or stone’ (*Pe* 380).

2294 **ratheled**: the verb occurs only here; cf. ME *ratheling* [wattling] and ModE ‘raddle’ [to weave or twist together].

2297 **that Arthur thee raghte**: Gawain declares in the Vulgate *Merlin* that he will receive knighthood only from King Arthur. The *Suite du Roman de Merlin* contains a detailed account of the actual ceremony (206–10).

2299–2301 Cf. the beheading incident in the First Continuation of

Chrétien's *Conte du Graal* (see p. 240), where, after two delays in delivering the stroke, the hero Carados tells his opponent to be done with it, attributing the procrastination to cowardice: 'Chevaliers, molt par iez coars,' Dist Carados, "fai erranment Ce que tu dois" ' [Knight, you are a great coward,' said Carados, 'do what you must do immediately'] (3500–3502).

2299 **gryndelly**: see n. to *Pa* 524.

2312 **snyrt** [grazed]: the verb, from ON, occurs only here in ME.

2313 Cf. 424–5 and n. to 425.

2316 **spenne-fote** occurs as the equivalent of Latin *pedibus coniunctis* [with feet joined] in the one other entry for the adverb in *MED*. *Les piez joigner e sauter* is the expression regularly used in French for 'to jump' (e.g. *Ipomedon* 8974; Vulgate *Merlin* 139, 226).

2319 **Braydes out a bryght sworde**: cf. 1584 and 1901, and for examples in other alliterative poems, see Oakden 1930: 270.

2320 **burn** [man] may be an error for *barn* [child], and some editors emend, but the distinction in sense is negligible, and the words were in any case not always kept distinct in ME (see *OED* headnote to *berne*).

2322, 2324 **mo** [numerically more] is kept distinct from **more** in the MS. As Gawain emphasizes (2323, 2327), he has pledged himself to receive without resistance only *one* blow.

2330 **hool!**: this exclamation was used to order an end to duels and tournaments (cf. Chaucer, *Knight's Tale*, *CT* I.1706, 2656).

2338 **gryndel**: cf. n. to *Pa* 524 ('Be noght so gryndel, goodman').

2340–42 The Green Knight's language is legalistic: according to the **covenaunt** at Arthur's court, Gawain had been due a [one] **stroke**, and, having thus been precisely **payed** (2341), he is now formally released (**I relece thee**) from his obligation to settle the **remnaunt** (any debt still outstanding after initial payment: see Alford 1988: 131) of the Green Knight's **rightes** (legal entitlement to an object or property: Alford 1988: 137). The Green Knight thus formally waives his right to exact a penalty for Gawain's withholding of the girdle in breach of the other covenant. Cf. the end of *Awntyrs*, where Galerón, after a duel with Gawain, resigns his claim to lands that had been given to Gawain: 'Her I make the releyse ... And ... resygne the my ryghte ... Of rentes and richesse I make the releyse' (640–46).

2343 The basic sense of **deliver** here is 'unencumbered' (*MED deliver*(e) *adj* 2(a)), and the expression 'his deliver strength' meant 'his full strength' (2(c)). Thus **If I deliver had ben** means 'had I used my full strength'.

2346, 2350 **profered**: for the application of the verb to the aiming of a blow, see *MED profren* 3(b), and cf. e.g. 'now as to the heved

proferynge strokes, now to the visage, now to the sides' (Vegetius 60).

- 2348 **trystely ... and truly**: cf. 'Temen to his body ful true and tryste' (*Pe* 460).
- 2357 **tappe**: see n. to 406–14. For the rhyme on **ta thee** (written as one word, *tape*, in the MS) and **wathe** (elsewhere spelled and pronounced *wothe*), cf. the rhyme **to thee/sothe** (413–15).
- 2358 **my wede** (the girdle belongs to the lord under the rules of the exchange of winnings) ... **woven girdel**: cf. 'the woven gyrdill' and 'The fey gyrdill ... sic weid' in Douglas, *Aeneid* XII.v.133, xiv.131, 141.
- 2364 **As perle by the white pese** occurs, as Silverstein noted, as an example of the rhetorical figure of comparison in Puttenham: Queen Elizabeth compares with the most acclaimed queen as 'an orient pearle to a white pease' (320).
- 2367 **wylyde** occurs nowhere else. It is usually explained as associated with *wile* [skill] and meaning 'skilful, intricate'.
- 2368 This is sound theology, as well as humane common sense: according to Aquinas, it is natural for a man to love life, and a sin is diminished if fear is a motivating factor (*Summa* II.1.qu.73, art.6).
- 2369 **in study stod a gret while**: cf. the bereaved man in *Lament*, 'I stand in a stodi, os a stok stille' (13), and 'Long he stode in a stody' (*DT* 9263).
- 2370 **So agreved for greme**: see n. to 316.
- 2372 The collocations recall *C* 850: 'So scharp schame to him schot he schrank at the herte.'
- 2374 **covetyse** (cf. 2380 and 2508): Gawain is being harsh on himself, since he has been explicitly exonerated from any interest in the material value of the girdle (2037, 2367), but not absurdly harsh: he did allow desire to possess an object to override the demands of 'truth', even if his coveting of it was not due to its costliness.
- 2375 **vilany and vice** (also collocated at *WA* 4679) are treated syntactically as a singular (**disstryes**) – as pairs of nouns often were in ME (Mustanoja 1960: 63) and as are the contrasting couple **largesse and leaute** at 2381 (**longes to**).
- 2376 For this instance of **cast** (*MS kest*) *MED* creates a special entry giving the otherwise unattested sense of 'a sartorial contrivance, a belt or a girdle' (*cast* *n* 2(c)). But the word as denoting a device for fastening is securely attested in Scots: 'Than festnyt thai with wetheis [withies] duris [doors] fast ... with mony sekыр cast' (*Hary's Wallace* VII.416; cf. VIII.1204).
- 2377 On **Brayde** [proffered], see n. to *Pe* 712.

- 2378 foule mot hit falle:** the idiom occurs elsewhere; cf. ‘Now foule falle hire for thi wo that care’ (*Troilus* IV.462), where metre proves that *foule* must be an adverb (T&G), not an adjectival noun (A&W).
- 2379–81** Gawain casts himself into an allegorical psychodrama of vices and virtues. **acorde** here has the sense ‘to be reconciled with’, knighthood and covetousness being naturally at odds with each other. Cf. the allegorical vignette in *Pe* 371: ‘Of care and me ye made acorde.’
- 2385–94** The language (**beknowe**, **faut-**) and the sequence of thought at 2385–8 (the confession and the undertaking to avoid repetition of the offence) is that of the confessional, and Bertilak takes up that analysis of the situation when he refers to the **mysses** as having been fully atoned for by the completeness of a **confession** (2391) whose validity is reinforced by the open evidence of due **penaunce** (2392) having been performed, and asserts that Gawain is now as effectively free from sin (2393–4) as he would be if Bertilak were really a priest (cf. 1883–4). His language also echoes the ideas of cleansing (**clene**, **polysed**, **pured as clene**) commonly applied to sacramental confession, which calls forth similar diction at C 1116 (‘pure thee with penaunce’) and 1131–4 (‘polyce him at the prest ... polysed as playn as parchemen schaven’).
- 2385** For **stille** = ‘submissively’, cf. *Pa* 371, 402.
- 2387 overtake your wille:** the expression occurs also at *Towneley Plays* 4.185–6 and is proved to mean ‘gain your good will’, rather than ‘Let me understand your wish’ (A&W), by *Cursor F* 24823–4 (‘Tha [Those] that he had na giftis tille With hotis [promises] faire he over-toke thaire wil’), where variant readings for *over-toke* include *wan* and *havid al*.
- 2395 gold-hemmed:** i.e. ‘edged or trimmed with gold’; cf. the gauntlets ‘of gray stele that were with gold hemmyd’ at *SJ* 757. The gold trim on the silk girdle is referred to at 1832 and 2038–9.
- 2400 wones:** on the metre-dictated plural, cf. 2198 and see n. to 1051.
- 2401 the remnaunt of this riche feste:** the feast of Christmas officially lasted until Epiphany (6 January), and so is not yet over.
- 2407–8** For the baring of his head (by removing his helmet) as a gesture of respect and politeness, see n. to 773–5. Gawain makes the gesture at this juncture because he is about to refuse Bertilak’s invitation to return home with him, and is anxious to avert any impression that he does so out of resentment: the action

is accompanied by earnest and emphatic thanks.

2410 mensk- could refer specifically to acts of courtesy and honour and good breeding as well as more generally to humanity and kindness. The word exemplifies that integration of religiousmoral and social values which is a pervasive feature of the poet's language (cf. the significance given to **courtaysye** in *Pe* 432 and n.).

2416–19 This list was one commonly used to demonstrate that no kind of excellence in respect of any kind of **sele** [blessing: 2422–3] – not the wisdom of Solomon, the strength of Samson, etc – served to protect a man from falling in love or from the wiles of women: Adam was deceived by Eve into eating the apple; Solomon 'had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart' (1 Kings 11:3); Sampson was tricked by his lover Delilah into revealing the secret of his strength (his hair) and then betrayed by her to the Philistines (Judges 16:18); David was besotted with Bathsheba and murdered her husband, which 'displeased the Lord' (2 Samuel 11:27), and his consequent suffering (**bale**) and penance are narrated in 2 Samuel 12.

2419 blended is often glossed 'deluded', a sense which the word could have, but, since Bathsheba was guilty of no duplicity, **Was blended with** must here mean 'was (morally) blinded by (his passion for)', and the verb must have the same sense ('render morally blind') that it has when used of e.g. good fortune (as at Hoccleve 1319: 'Me blent so prosperitee').

2424 mused, evidently occasioned by the need for a rhyme for **excused**, probably means no more than 'lived' and refers to mankind generally rather than specifically to those who were led astray by love or who 'doted' or 'wandered in mind' (A&W), a sense deduced from that of some associated nouns (e.g. *musard* [idle dreamer]), but one in which the verb is not recorded. The sense 'dwell' is without parallel in ME, but occurs in French: 'Et ainsi qu'il musoit en la ville, il vit ledit Jaques Reboutin enmi la rue' (Reg. crim. Chât., I, 1389–92, 17, cited in *DMF* sv *muser*), where *musoit* means 'tarried, dwelled'.

2426 For the specifically sexual sense of *use* [have relations with] here, see *MED* *usen* v 2(b).

2427–8 Gawain's point is that, since such illustrious men could be conquered by women's wiles (2422–3), it is not remarkable that a mere **fol** such as himself (2414) also fell victim to them, and he should therefore be **excused** (2425–8). Similar lists elsewhere are followed by similar conclusions: cf. 'Dunc ne m'esmerveil pas de nus ... ne de vus' (*Waldef* 2067–8) and Gower's more earnest

version of Gawain's self-excusation: 'I thoghte how love is swete, Which hath so wise men reclaimed, And was myself the lasse aschamed' (CA VIII.2720–22). In their personal application of the moral of the list, both men may reflect the logic of a Latin proverb, 'Adam, Samsonem, Loth, David et Salomonem Femina deceptit: quis modo tutus erit?' (*Proverbia* no. 519), an English version of which (substituting Peter for Loth) occurs in *Dives and Pauper* II, 80: 'Woman deceyvvyd Adam and Sampson, Petir, Davyd, and Salomon: ho may then be sykyr from womanys gyle?'

- 2431 saynt** [belt] is always used specifically of a girdle made out of a woven silk strip (cf. 1832, 2358), and probably here refers to the length of silk forming the cincture itself, this a-verse thus concentrating on that, as opposed to the gold trim (2430b) and the ornamental pendants (2431b). Cf. *Promptorium* 451 ('seynt or cors [length or strip of silk] of a gyrdylle: *Textum* [woven fabric]'); cf. 94 ('Coors of sylke or threde: *Textum*').
- 2433 surfet**, though occasionally used of transgression generally, was normally and more strictly used with reference to 'overindulgence' in eating, etc. The word thus suits the context, for Gawain here defines his fault specifically as a weakness of the **flesch** (2435) – though that was more characteristically associated with the sins of the flesh proper (gluttony, lust and sloth), from which Gawain is signally free. He is again severe but not illogical in his self-analysis: his choice of physical life over moral truth represented a commitment to body rather than soul.
- 2435 The faut and the fayntyse of the flesch crabbed** is a characterization of the flesh common in penitential contexts. Cf. 'The flesch is false, frele and feynt' ('Mannys Soule' 3).
- 2443 right name**: the Green Knight had identified himself only as 'The Knight of the Grene Chapel' (454); Gawain here enquires after his true name.
- 2445 Bertilak de Hautdesert**: the MS has been read as *Bercilak* or *Bertilak*. The latter reading is supported by the likely derivation of the name from OF *Bertolais/Bertelak*, who appears in the *Lancelot* as Arthur's adversary, and who figures as *Bertelak* in the ME *Merlin*. **Hautdesert** (the name of his castle) probably means 'high solitary place': see Smith 1965, sv *desert* and *haut*.
- 2446–66** MS *Morgue* at 2446 has been read by previous editors as *Morgne*. However, as noted by Twomey 1999, *Morgue* is the normal form in ME and French, and is the one found in the poet's source for these lines (*Lancelot* (M) XXII.275): 'Il fu voirs que Morgue le seur al roi Arthur sot d'enchantement et de caraies sor totes femes ... si que ... par tot le país ne disoient mie qu'ele fu feme, ançois l'apeloient Morgue la dieuesse' [it was a fact that

Morgue, King Arthur's sister, knew about enchantments and spells more than any woman ... so that ... throughout the land no one spoke of her as a woman, but everyone called her 'Morgue the goddess'; cf. **Morgue the Goddess** (G 2452). The other facts concerning **Morgue** in *Sir Gawain* – her hatred of Guinevere (2460), her ugliness (950–69), her apprenticeship with Merlin and his love for her (2447–50), and her family tree (2464–6) – derive from the same source: 'Il fu voirs que Morgue fu fille al duc de Tintajuel et a Egerne sa feme, qui puis fu roine de Bretagne et feme Uterpendragon, et de li fu nes li roi Artus ... Li dux estoit mult lais chevaliers et Morgue retraioit a lui, kar molt estoit laide' [Morgue was in fact the daughter of the Duke of Tintagel and of Igerne his wife, who subsequently became Queen of Britain and wife of Utherpendragon, and from her was born King Arthur ... The duke was a very ugly knight and Morgue took after him, being very ugly]. The *Lancelot* goes on to tell how Morgue had an affair with a knight named Guiamor, and how Guinevere put an end to it, upon which Morgue left the court in anger: 'si s'acointa de Merlin qui l'ama plus que nule rien, si li aprist tant de caraies et d'enchantemens come ele sot puis et demora avec lui grant piece ... Por ce fu la haïne qu'ele ot envers la roine Genievre tos les jors de sa vie' [and then she met Merlin, who loved her more than anything and taught her all she later knew about spells and enchantments, and she stayed with him for a long time ... This is the reason for the hatred she had towards Guinevere for as long as she lived] (*Lancelot* (M) XXIV.300–301). The Vulgate also states that Morgan's learning and the marvels she wrought thereby earned her the epithet *la fée* (**la Faye** [fairy], 2446): Vulgate *Merlin* 73, 338; *Livre d'Artus* 136.

2447–8 The syntax is unclear, and the MS at 2448 reads *ho taken*, of which no grammatical sense can be made. Interpretations vary. What is clear from the vocabulary – **quoyntyse**, **clergye**, **craftes**, **maystres** (and **conable clerk** at 2450) – is that the wonders of the tale are being attributed, not to magic in the modern sense (for which the ME term was **fayrye**: cf. 240), but to magic in the medieval sense: i.e. a *science* practised by *clerkes* [scholars]. The 'magic' removal of the rocks in Chaucer's Franklin's Tale is similarly performed by a *clerk* expert in *magyk natureel* (CT V.1155) by complicated astronomical calculations (1261–96). In effect, the paranormal elements of the tale are being rationalized; and, in romance, when the marvellous is being thus 'explained' as *magic*, it is often, as here, traced back to Merlin, here called a **clerk**.

2448 Cf. '(The round table) That Merlyn with his maystries made in

his time' (P3A 469).

2456, 2459 wayned, wayved: since *n* and *u* were both written as two minims and are often indistinguishable, and since *waynen* and *wayven* had overlapping senses, it is occasionally unclear which verb is meant. Since the sense 'send' is better attested for *waynen*, that is the verb that has been assumed at 2456 (cf. 'And that has wayned me hider': 264). But the sense at 2459 is more like 'gave' and closer to 1032 ('the wyne worschip that he him wayved hade'), where the parallel in WA (see n. to **1032**) indicates the verb is *wayven* and not *waynen*.

2460 According to the *Lancelot*, Morgan conceived a lifelong hatred for Guinevere when Guinevere terminated Morgan's affair with Guiamor (see n. to **2446–66**). Gawain's adventure is thus explained in terms of Arthurian 'history': he has got caught up in a well-known family feud.

2464 thyn aunt: the family history is based on the passage from the *Lancelot* cited in n. to 2446–66. Besides Morgan (her daughter by her first husband Gorlois, duke of Tintagel), Igerne has two children by Utherpendragon: Arthur and a daughter, whose sons by King Loth include Gawain.

2471 nikked him nay: cf. 'And all nikked him with nay' (706).

2473 the Prince of Paradise: cf. C 195.

2478 Whiderwarde-so-ever he wolde: such expressions are common with respect to the departure of characters who keep their missions secret (cf. 'Their wiste no man that tyde Whedirwarde he wolde ryde': *Sir Percyvell* 1808–9) or whom the narrative does not follow to their destinations (cf. 'whider him god liked': *William* 3486), and mysterious figures in chivalric romance tend to disappear to unknown places (cf. 460). Bertilak in fact now has the known address of Hautdesert to return to, but the formula leaves about him an air of mystery.

2480 grace was used of the remission of a penalty due (*MED* *grace* *n* 4(e)), and in other contexts (especially theological ones) refers to a gift that is freely given rather than deserved. The point is that the Green Knight could strictly have exacted the full penalty (of decapitation) for Gawain's small lapse in the test set him; but he formally waived his right to greater punishment (2342).

2481–2 Contrast 693 ('Oft ledeles alone he lenges on nightes'). The difference in sense is small, but the difference in emphasis makes the homeward journey seem less dramatically austere. **mony aventure** likewise parallels 718–25, but in more subdued and dismissive fashion. See **pp. 256–7** for further comment.

2482 mony aventure: *many* is often followed simply by a singular noun (not preceded by *a*) in ME (e.g. 2493). The reading *mony a*

venture (A&W) is unlikely: *venture* (= exploit, feat) is a post-medieval usage.

- 2486 Abelef** is a variant of heraldic *enbelif* [diagonal, ‘bend wise’]. The heraldicization of the girdle thus begins here: Gawain is using it to ‘emblazon’ or heraldically *betoken* (2488) the **faute** (2488) no longer visible in the now healed nick in his neck over which the girdle sits. He later (2506) uses the heraldic term **bende** when describing those reasons of public penance and mortification that dictate his wearing the girdle permanently, and both **bende** and **abelef** are used when the Round Table formally adopts the green **bende** as its heraldic badge (2517). **bende** could refer either to a diagonal stripe on a coat of arms or to a diagonal band or sash worn by members of a chivalric order or affinity (see illustrations in Boulton 2000: 89 and *Ordinances* 35). On the way in which the heraldic symbol of the pentangle (619ff) is poetically replaced by that of the green **bende**, see Schmidt 1987: 149 and pp. 255–6.
- 2487 Loken under his lyft arme:** the girdle is worn diagonally, over Gawain’s right shoulder and under his **lyft arme**, like a heraldic **bende** which was ‘usually drawn from dexter chief to sinister base’ (*MED* headnote sv *bende* n¹ 4).
- 2495–2504** The language and the emphasis on revealing faults with shame and pain – **Beknowes, schewed, blame, tened, telle, groned, schewe, schame** – is again that of shrift, and thus makes this passage the third ‘confession’ in the poem (cf. 1876–84, 2385–94).
- 2495 costes of care:** cf. ‘Whenne David knew his cost of care, Rewed him never thing so sare’ (*Cursor* T 7963–4).
- 2496–7** Gawain obviously tells the story in an order different from that of the poem. Since the court is anxious to know what happened when he met the Green Knight, he deals with the events at the Chapel first, and then explains the nick in the neck by relating the events concerning the lady and the girdle on his way to the Chapel. This makes the girdle the climax of his rendition.
- 2498 nirt** (probably from ON) occurs only here.
- 2506 bende:** see n. to **2486**.
- 2511 man:** MS *non* is usually assumed to be an error for *mon*. **hit** is sometimes taken as a verb and the line understood to mean ‘For none can conceal his guilt without misfortune occurring.’ But the next line (**For ...**) indicates that this one refers to something that cannot be removed. **hit** is therefore better taken as a pronoun (for pronouns at line ending cf. 1785, 1828), **unhap** as a verb and **unhap ne may hit** as meaning ‘cannot disentangle it (from

himself)'. This also provides a more pertinent antithesis with the pentangle knot which this **bende of ... blame** (2506) has replaced: Gawain now sees the shame of his fault as lodged within him by a knot so tight it cannot be untied, just as the virtues had been **harder happened** (655) in him than in any other man. His sense that he is stained for ever has struck some critics as doctrinally suspect (Barron 1987: 172), but as chivalric logic it is orthodox: 'Knyghtes ones schamed recovery's hit never' (Malory 218).

2513 The same construction provides a metrical frame at 2492.

2515 lordes and ladies: MS *ladis* is emended to *ledis* by Burrow and T&G, who argue that the context is masculine and **ladies** cannot belong to a military brotherhood. However, Arthur's 'Order of the Green Baldric' plainly parallels the Order of the Blue Garter (see final n.), to which ladies belonged from the earliest times (Collins 2000). As honorary members they also wore the insignia: the effigy of Chaucer's granddaughter, Alice Chaucer, shows her wearing the garter on her left shoulder (see Anderson 1945: 30). On devices worn by ladies and squires as signs of affinity to orders, see further Keen 1984: 183.

2517 A bende abelef: the court here formally converts the girdle into a heraldic badge (see n. to **2486**). Cf. the 'bende of grene' on the lawyers' banner in *Winner and Waster* (149), another alliterative poem which invents heraldic badges as symbols of group identity.

2518 Imitation of apparel occurs elsewhere as a sign of regard and respect. When Arthur and Guinevere wear their crowns at a feast, so do Ban and Bors 'por l'amor d'els' (Vulgate *Merlin* 320); when Charlemagne wears his beard over his corslet, 'Pur sue amor altretel funt li altre' (*Chanson de Roland* 3123). A comic instance of such deferential imitation occurs in the story of the sick abbess recommended by her physician to take a lover, all the other nuns then following suit 'out of respect for her' (Power 1922: 625).

2521 boke of romaunce: a reference to the (real or imaginary) 'book' that gives the story authority. 'Romance' in ME can refer to the French language (as well as to a narrative genre) and perhaps does so here.

2523 Brutus bokes: see n. to **13–14**.

2525 The first alliterative long line of the poem is repeated in the last long line. The number, significantly, recalls the pentangle, with its five points, each representing five virtues. The total number of stanzas is also 101, as in *Pearl*, which similarly ends (significantly at line 1212) with a repetition of its opening line, as does *Patience*. A number of ME romances end by repeating their first line(s) (*Avowing of Arthur*, *Sir Degrevant*, *Octavian Imperator*), the

closest parallel being the alliterative-stanzaic *Awntyrs*, which repeats its opening line ('In the tyme of Arthur an aunter betydde') in its closing lines ('In the tyme of Arthore This anter betide': cf. *G* 2522). In the opinion of Robert of Basevorn (*Forma Praedicandi* 310), 'illi curiosissime faciunt qui simpliciter idem principium et finem habent' [with most elegant intricacy do they finish, who have the same beginning and end], and he associated such compositional circularity with the perfection of God, 'alpha et omega, principium et finis' (cf. *Sidrak* B 5141–6).

2529–30 Many ME romances end with a prayer. The periphrasis for Christ ('He who wore the crown of thorns') evokes the crucifixion. He suffered precisely to enable man to enter into the **blisse** of heaven. Similar formulae in ME romance, including ones rhyming **thorne** with **biforne**, are listed in Dalrymple 2000: 218–19.

HONY SOYT QUI MAL PENCE: on this motto of the 'Order of the Blue Garter', as it was called at the time, see pp. 257–8. The order was founded by Edward III, according to some chroniclers in imitation of King Arthur's Round Table. The adoption of the green girdle as a heraldic device is also associated with the founding of a new chivalric order in the ballad version of this romance, *The Greene Knight*, where it is represented as the origin of the insignia of the Order of the Bath.

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Editorial Emendations

Below are listed all the places where the reading of the one surviving MS (British Library, Cotton Nero A.x) differs (other than as a spelling variant) from that given in the present edition of the texts. The reading of the latter is given first, before a square bracket. Emendations on metrical grounds, not of the words in the MS, but of their form, are not listed here (see pp. [xxxi–xxxii](#)); nor are the erroneous alterations by a second scribe (see note to [C 924](#)), nor readings which editors agree on but which are now only partially legible in the MS.

PEARL

35	spryngande] sprygade
53	penned] spenned
54	fyrce] fyrte
60	precious] precos
68	rokkes rich] rych rokke3
95	gracious] gracos
115	As] a
138	over] oþer
142	hoped] hope
144	aye] a
185	hoped] hope
192	precious] precos
210	hit <i>supplied</i>
286	brought] bro3
309	is] ins (īs)

323	man] ma
342	in] &
353	Stynt] stynst
363	I <i>supplied</i>
369	kythes] lyþe3
382	maneres] marere3
433	sayd] syde
436	begynner] byngyner
460	tryste] tyste
461	saule] sawhe
479	he] ho
524	pay] pray
532	hem] hen
538	and] & &
558	waning] wanig
572	called] calle
616	lowere] lere
635	hem] hym
649	out] out out
673	thus] þus þus
675	face] fate
678	hille] hylle3
690	koynt duitour he] kyntly oure
700	For] sor
714	touch] touth
739	ryghtwys] ry3tywys
752	carped] carpe
786	four <i>supplied</i>
802	nem] men
829	swete] swatte
836	saw] sayt3
848	nauther] non oþer
856	that] þa
861	Lamb] lonbe
892	that ²] þay
905	amonk] among
932	I] and I
934	gracious] gracious
935	byggynge3] lygynge3
958	flesch] fresch
977	I <i>supplied</i>
997	John <i>supplied</i>
1012	twynne-hue] twynne how
1014	jacynght] jacyngh

1058	As] a
1063	mynster] mynster
1064	refet] reget
1068	anunder] an vnde3
1086	fresch] freuch
1104	with gret] withouten
1109	tell] knaw
1111	gold] glode
1117	there <i>supplied</i>
1179	quik] quyke3
1185	If] inf (īf)
1196	myght] mo3ten

CLEANNES

3	forthering] forering
15	sulpen] sulped
32	neghe] ne3en
50	heven] her euen
64	turne] tne
67	byes] hy3e3
98	Ferkes] ferre
105	redily] certe3
108	thagh] þa3 þa3
110	was <i>supplied</i>
117	as segges <i>serely</i>] a segge soerly
127	pore] poueuer
134	<i>transposed with</i> 135
135	He] hit
143	to <i>supplied</i>
146	gnede] nede
159	gryspytyng] gryspyng
187	tyrauntrye] tyrauntyre
215	methe] met3
228	erde] worlde
233	little] lyttle
244	apertly] pertly
268	wymmen <i>supplied</i>
312	withinne] withinme
318	openande] vpon lofte] loste
322	bolkes] boske3
359	styntes] styste3
363	ryfe] ryse
380	haled] aled
395	the mase] þe masse þe mase

427	sevententhe]	seuenþe
430	ythes]	yre3
432	That]	þer
449	were]	wern
460	costes]	costese
464	chyst]	kyst
469	doue]	doune (doūe)
475	whyrləd]	wyrle
481	doue]	doveue
515	segges]	manne3
520	dedes]	synne <i>interlined in second hand</i>
529	skaylyng and skylnade]	skylly skynalde
532	that]	þat þat
577	Thus]	þat
584	Himself]	hym sele
586	He]	he he
608	ful	<i>supplied</i>
652	yarked]	3ark
655	teme]	tonne
657	hit]	he
659	bileved]	byene
664	vaunt]	avaunt
692	If]	inf (if)
703	come]	conne
713	chaunged]	chaunge
727	thy]	þyn
735	tan up	<i>supplied</i>
740	fro]	for
743	not	<i>supplied</i>
745	highly]	lo3ly
747	usles]	vsle
752	if]	of
758	hit yernes	<i>transposed</i>
777	wendes]	wende3 wende3
778	mournande]	wepande
781	sonde]	sondes
783	Mevande]	meuand meuande
795	aucly]	autly
799	he says	<i>supplied</i>
810	gruched]	gru3t
812	was ¹	<i>supplied</i>
822	unsavere]	vnfauere
839	clater]	clat3

840	wordes] worde
855	for <i>supplied</i>
856	peril] pil
882	him] hem
885	the <i>supplied</i>
889	him] hem
892	ever] þat euer
900	save] haue
906	restes] rest
914	hit] I
915	Him] hem
	kynded] kynned
926	There] þen
935	tayt] tyt
945	kayren hem] kayre ne
981	her] he
1002	nomen] no mon
1019	smelle] synne
1038	spumande] spuniande
1040	festeres] festred
1041	kynde <i>supplied</i>
1056	counsel] counseyl counseyl
1065	the <i>supplied</i>
1101	hende] clene
1118	hit] hym
1123	ho <i>supplied</i>
1164	and] þat
1178	wasted with] wast wyth with
1186	was <i>supplied</i>
1194	enfamed] enfannined
1220	hem ² <i>supplied</i>
1225	Soverayn] soueray
1227	ful <i>supplied</i>
1234	tyrved] tuyred
1243	so] fo
1253	that <i>supplied</i>
1267	hem kyllen] hokyllen
1274	the] þ
1291	nomen] numnend (nūnēd)
1294	hyrnes] hyrne
1295	fyndes] fynde
1308	profecie] profetie
1329	upon] vpn
1336	on] no

1339	never] neun (neū)
1358	glory] gorie
1391	mede] med
1402	Sturne] sturnen
1403	out <i>supplied</i>
1405	the] þe þe
1406	sewes] seved
1408	golde] glolde
1429	forth the] forþe
1452	so] fo
1458	ful] foul
1461	covacles] cauacles
1470	amatyst] amaffised
1472	Peritotes] penitotes
1474	bekyr and bolle] bekyrande þe bolde
1485	launces <i>supplied</i>
1491	there <i>supplied</i>
1506	bryghte] bryȝtȝ
1516	sauteray] saueray
1524	is] ins (is)
1559	bede] ede
1571	hatte <i>supplied</i>
1573	tee] þenne
1579	of] &
1594	into] in
1616	thee with] with þe
1618	cler <i>supplied</i>
1619	as] as as
1622	Beau] leue
1625	connynges] connyng
1647	he <i>supplied</i>
1661	to] on to
1717	for <i>supplied</i>
1722	Has sende] hatȝ sende hatȝ sende
1744	coler] cloler
1746	Baltazar] baltaȝa
1776	scayled] scaped
1807	Wye] lorde
1808	teldes] telled
1810	owne <i>supplied</i>

PATIENCE

3	asuagen] aswagend
35	syn] fyn

61	in termes] in þe termes
73	stouned] stownod
78	tee] com
84	For] fof
85	aproche I <i>transposed</i>
94	glowande] g wande
118	that that] þat
122	in <i>supplied</i>
152	colde] clolde
157	bales] bale
166	Neptune] Nepturne
189	haspe-stede unhende] haspede
194	the] þe þe
211	bathes] babeþes
220	her <i>supplied</i>
238	Mayster] god
240	one] vn
245	to] to to
259	leve] lyue
277	the <i>supplied</i>
313	sayd] say
348	non] mon
364	ledes <i>supplied</i>
372	dared] doured
389	a ... a <i>supplied</i>
411	him in <i>supplied</i>
439	fro] for
459	thereunder] þervnde
499	away] & away
512	for] fol
520	as ²] a
522	malicious] malcious
523	nogh] no3

SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

58	were] werere
88	longe ¹] lenge
95	Of] of of
100	the <i>supplied</i>
113	with] wit
124	sylveren] syluener
142	ever <i>supplied</i>
157	hue <i>supplied</i>
168	the ²] pe

182	as] as as
186	knights] kynge3
203	hauberghe] hawbrgh
236	glowande] lowande
267	fychtynges] fe3tyng
282	so] fo
312	gryndellayk] gry dellayk
336	his] hyns (hȳs)
343	Wawan] Gawan
384	so] fo
425	schede] scade
432	runischly] ruyschly
438	he were] ho we
449	also] as
531	fage] sage
554	Boors] Boos
629	endeles] emdele3
634	vertues] verertue3
652	things] þyng
660	that nowhere couthe man fynde]
	[?]quere fynde
697	negh] noghe
705	Chapel] clapel
736	wye] kny3t
751	servyce] seruy
774	Saynt] say
775	courtaysye] cortaysly
795	Towres] towre
803	inoghe] innghē (īnghe)
806	Avinaunt] auinant or auinaut
813	trowe] trowoe
815	him the yateward] þe wy3e and com
	<i>supplied</i>
850	chefly] clesly
862	him] hem
865	him] hyn
877	that] þa
883	chefly] cefly
884	table] tapit
893	sleye] sle3e3
930	Chaplaynes] claplayne3
946	Ho] he
956	schedes] scheduler
958	chalk-white] mylkquyte

967	balwe] bay
971	lut] went
992	lord] kyng
1006	gome] grome
1014	That] &
1021	<i>transposed with</i> 1022
1030	Charres] ledes
	chymne] hymne
1032	that] &
1037	mercy] nerci
1053	ne <i>supplied</i>
1069	that] tha
1072	first] þe fyrst
1092	your] 3owe
1117	thay <i>supplied</i>
1126	are <i>supplied</i>
1129	her ¹] he
1141	bare thre <i>transposed</i>
1158	Hay, hay] hay
1183	dernely] derfly
1187	on lyve <i>supplied</i>
1195	and <i>supplied</i>
1208	gay] fayr
1211	ful <i>supplied</i>
1214	your] þourr
1216	by] he
	bos] byhoue3
1223	rest] bedde
1253	for <i>supplied</i>
1255	gat] þat
1262	Answared] aswared
1266	nis hit] nysen or nyseu
1273	semblaunce] semblaunt
1280	was passed] paste
1281	as ho liked him and loved him
	swythe] lyk ahȳ loued mych
1283	hit] I
	burn] burde
1286	schuld] sclulde
1293	ungayn <i>supplied</i>
	gos hit <i>transposed</i>
1297	good ² <i>supplied</i>
1304	prestly] fire
	so] fo

1315	Was] with
1333	boweles] bale3
1334	the lere] & lere
1344	So] fo
1345	Even down] euenden
1357	ayther] aþer
1358	fonges] for
1372	syre] lorde
1376	Gawan] gaway
1386	That] & wonnen <i>supplied</i>
1389	he] ho
1394	yourselven] horseluen
1406	What] þat
	acheves] bytyde3
1412	crowen] crowe3
1435	withinne] wytinne
1440	fro] for
	soght was] wi3t
1441	borlych and <i>supplied</i>
	brod <i>illegible</i>
1473	To come] com to
1537	yow <i>supplied</i>
1580	and <i>supplied</i>
1583	luflyche] luslych
1587	fnasted] fnast
1588	freke] freke3
1615	swythe <i>supplied</i>
1623	laghede] and la3ed
1639	hent <i>supplied</i>
1649	white] ly3t
1652	much ² <i>supplied</i>
1657	lede] kny3t
1662	howso] how se euer
1690	morsel] [<i>four minims</i>]orsel
1693	before] biforere
1700	a-traverce] atrayteres
1712	to] to to
1719	lef] lif
1724	Yonde] loude
1752	dele him <i>supplied</i>
1755	com <i>supplied</i>
1770	prynces] prynce
1799	thogh] of
1810	tyme] tyne

1815	nade] hade
1825	swyft by] swyftel
1830	that] þat þat
1840	hit] hit yow
1855	him com to herte] hit come to his hert
1858	Myght he] my3 ho
1863	fro] for
1872	ho] he
1878	lysten] lyfte leren] lern
1893	let <i>supplied</i>
1906	laches him] cache3 by
1909	bremly <i>supplied</i> broth] bray
1919	Her] her her
1936	the <i>supplied</i>
1941	porchas] chepe3
1973	ferk] frk
1981	ayain] a3ay
1989	lad was <i>transposed</i>
1999	the ³ <i>supplied</i>
2010	lamp] laupe
2027	vertuous] vertuu[+ <i>abbreviation for</i> <i>‘us’</i>]
2053	he] þay
2076	resayve schulde <i>transposed</i>
2105	dynges] dynne3
2110	yow] þe
2131	not] mot
2132	chose <i>supplied</i>
2137	and] & &
2150	go] ge
2151	not <i>supplied</i>
2171	were] we
2177	hit riched] his riche
2187	Here] he
2205	as] at
2206	my] the reken] renk
2223	with to] with o
2240	welcom] welcon
2247	thy ¹] þy þy
2291	his] hs

2305	he] he he
2337	ryngande] rykande
2339	habbes] habbe
2367	for ² <i>supplied</i>
2390	hardily] hardilyly
2392	of poynt] of þe poynt
2426	With] with wyth
2448	has] ho
2461	glopnyng] gopnyng
	gome] gomen
2472	and kennen <i>supplied</i>
2482	he] &
2506	in <i>supplied</i>
2511	man] non

Glossary

The Glossary includes all words which are not found in Modern English or which differ in sense from their Modern English counterparts. It does not include some words whose sense does not differ, and whose spelling differs little or not at all, from that which they now have. It also excludes some words glossed at the foot of the page, if the word so glossed occurs only once, has no cognates elsewhere in the MS and if its meaning is adequately dealt with in the footgloss and/or endnote. When a sense cited in the Glossary occurs not more than half a dozen times, all instances are usually cited, by line number. Otherwise, only one citation is given, followed by & (if the word occurs in that sense elsewhere in the same poem) or by + (if it occurs also in one or more of the other poems). An - (e) appended to a headword indicates a final -e (etymological, grammatical or belonging to a variant form) which has sometimes been retained from the MS spelling (or which we have supplied) where grammar and/or metre requires it. An asterisk indicates that the word is discussed in the endnotes. A gloss that immediately follows the headword and for which no line references are given indicates a base sense that might not otherwise be apparent. Names (of persons,

places, etc) are listed separately (see [p. 989](#)).

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>1</i>	first person
<i>2</i>	second person
<i>3</i>	third person
<i>acc</i>	accusative
<i>adj</i>	adjective
<i>adv</i>	adverb
<i>comp</i>	comparative
<i>conj</i>	conjunction
<i>dat</i>	dative
<i>dem</i>	demonstrative
<i>gen</i>	genitive
<i>imp</i>	imperative
<i>impers</i>	impersonal
<i>inf</i>	infinitive
<i>inter</i>	interjection
<i>interrog</i>	interrogative
<i>n</i>	noun
<i>nom</i>	nominative
<i>num</i>	numeral
<i>pa</i>	past tense
<i>part adj</i>	participial adjective
<i>pl</i>	plural
<i>poss</i>	possessive
<i>pa ppl</i>	past participle
<i>prep</i>	preposition
<i>pres</i>	present tense
<i>pres ppl</i>	present participle
<i>pron</i>	pronoun
<i>refl</i>	reflexive
<i>rel</i>	relative
<i>s</i>	singular
<i>subj</i>	subjunctive
<i>super</i>	superlative
<i>v</i>	verb
<i>vn</i>	verbal noun

a *inter* ah! C 733, Pa 485, G 1746

a, an *indefinite article* a, an Pe 9 + ; one G 287, 314, 2249, 2323, 2341

abatayment see **batelment**

abate *v* bring low, humble C 1356; *pa pl* **abated** assuaged, lessened *Pe* 123*; cf. **batede**

abayst *pa ppl* ~ **of** abashed at, confused at C 149; *pa* **bayst** was disconcerted G 376

ablef *adv* (*heraldic*) diagonal, slantwise G 2486*, 2517

abide *v* suffer, bear, undergo *Pe* 348*, *Pa* 7, G 1754, 2090; face, endure C 856; remain, reside, dwell C 1673; wait *Pa* 70, *imp* G 2217, await C 764; *pres* **abides** waits patiently for C 436, 486; waits his moment G 1900; *pa* **abod** remained C 365, **abate** persevered *Pe* 617; *pa ppl* **abiden** undergone *Pe* 1090; cf. **bide(n)**

abode *n* stay, delay G 687

abominaciones *n pl* (*theological*) pagan customs abhorrent to God C 1173

aboute *prep* about *Pe* 75 +, around C 1173, G 351&; *adv* about, around *Pa* 271 +; here and there G 766, 2029, 2082, (all) around C 483 +; in the vicinity *Pe* 932; **all** ~ all around C 84 +

above(n) *adv and prep* above *Pe* 1023 +; (*at table*) higher up G 73, sitting above C 38; on top G 856, at the top C 1382, (of the table) G 112; over the surface C 1462, G 166; thereover G 153

abydyng *n* forbearance, endurance *Pa* 419

abyrne *n* abyss C 214, 363*, 963, *Pa* 143, 248, 318, 362

abyt *n* garment C 141

acces *n* assault by fever, fever *Pa* 325

achaufed *pa and pa ppl* heated, kindled C 1143; *refl* got warm G 883; cf. **chaufen**

acheve *v* achieve, obtain *Pe* 475, *pres pl* G 1107; **acheve/acheved to** succeed in arriving at G 1838, reached G 1857; *pres* **acheves** comes about, occurs G 1406*; *pa ppl* **acheved** (*of a knight's adventure*) brought to a successful conclusion G 1081*

acoles *pres* embraces G 1936, *pl* **acolen** G 2472

acorde (1) *n* agreement *Pe* 509; settlement of differences *Pe* 371*

acorde (2) *v* reconcile G 2405; *refl* make terms G 2380; *pres* **acordes** is appropriate G 631; **him acordes** agrees G 1863, *pres pl* **acorden** agree G 1514; *pa* **acorded of** agreed to G 1408, ~ **to** were consistent with (*Pe* 819), ~ **with** matched G 602; *pa ppl* **acorded** agreed (to be) G 2519

acroche *v* draw to oneself, attract, absorb (*Pe* 1069*)

adoun *adv* (*variant of* **doun**; *used for metrical reasons*) down *Pe* 988 +, downward *Pa* 235

adreye see **drye** (2)

adubblement *n* adornment, enrichment, finery, appointments *Pe* 72&; see also **dub-**

affray *n* alarm, perturbation *Pe* 1174

affyen *pres pl* ~ **hem in** put their trust in *Pa* 331

afraid *pa* alarmed C 1780

after *prep* (a) after C 6 +; behind C 857 +; (ask/seek) for C 619, G 1215; (b) in accord with, according to *Pe* 998; in relation to C 1098; for the length of G 218; along *Pe* 125; towards C 420, *Pa* 86; *adv* afterwards *Pe* 256 +; behind C 503; in accord G 171; *conj* after G 2525

again *adv* again, a second time *Pe* 326; back G 530, back again C 1705; in return G 386, 1217, 1638; cf. **ayain**

again(e)s *prep* against *Pe* 79, 1199, 1200, 1711, C 266, 826; towards C 611, 1228, G 971; ~ **the sunne** in the sun *Pe* 28

again-tote *n* act of looking back C 931

aght(e) (1) *pa* owned, had G 767, 843, 1775; owed G 1941; ought C 122

aght(e) (2) *num* eight C 24, 331, 356, *Pa* 11, 29

aghtsum *pron* one of eight C 411

aghtthe *adj* eighth *Pe* 1011

aglyghte *pa* slid, slipped *Pe* 245*

agreved *pa ppl* deeply upset, mortified G 2370*; cf. **greve(n)** (2)

alarom *n* alarm, signal to arms C 1207

alder, **aldest** see **olde**

algate *adv* at any rate, in any case G 141

aliche *adv* alike, similarly C 1477; cf. **ilyche**

all(e) *adj* all *Pe* 16 +; **before the court** ~ before all those in the court G 1408; *adv* absolutely, really, completely *Pe* 1094 +; everywhere *Pe* 97, 1048, C 1464, *Pa* 365; *pron* everything *Pe* 360 +, the whole G 2182; all of them *Pa* 34; everyone, all persons *Pe* 404 +; *conj* even if G 143

allyt(e) see **lyte** (2)

Almyght *adj* almighty *Pe* 498*; as *n* **the Almyghty** the Almighty (= God) *Pe* 1063

aloft(e) *adv* at the top G 194, 572; around the top C 1183, 1444; up *Pa* 447, G 435, 981, 2060, 2288; up from the surface G 1818; *prep* on top of G 1648

along *adv* ~ **thereas** along the route where C 769

alosed *pa ppl* praised, commended C 274, G 1512

alow (1) *adv* with a low voice, quietly C 670

alow (2) *v* allow, recognize as valid *Pe* 634; cf. **loue**

aloynte *pa ppl* removed to a distance *Pe* 893

als(e) *adv* also, as well *Pe* 765 +

also *adv* likewise, in the same way *Pe* 872 +; equally *Pe* 685, 1071, C 656, 1792, G 1022; in addition *Pa* 263, G 90; ~ **tite/faste** at once C 1099, 1751; *conj* ~ ... **as** as ... as C 984, 1045–6, 1618, *Pa* 291, G 449

althagh *conj* although *Pe* 759, 857

altherfayrest *super adj* finest imaginable C 1379
altherfynest *super adj* finest of all C 1637
althergrattest *super adj* biggest of its kind G 1441
altherrichest *super adj* supremely splendid C 1666
altherswetest *super adj* sweetest of all C 699
althertruest *super adj* most reliable G 1486
altogeder *adv* simultaneously, at the same time C 15
alwayses *adv* always G 1482
alyve *adj* alive G 1269; **God** ~ the living God *Pe* 445*
amatyst *n* amethyst *Pe* 1016; ~ **stones** gems of amethyst C 1470
ame *n* aim, target *Pa* 128
amed *pa* rated, valued (C 698)
amende *v* improve, get better G 898*; **amended** put right C 248; cf. **mended**
amesyng *vn* tempering of wrath, moderation *Pa* 400
amonestes *pres* admonishes, urges C 818
among(es) *adv* as well, in addition C 1414, **amonk** *Pe* 905*; *prep* among *Pe* 470 +; along with G 473, 1927
amount *v* amount G 1197; *pa* **amounted** increased C 395*; cf. **mountes**
and *conj* and *Pe* 559 +; if *Pe* 560, 598, C 1346, *Pa* 76, G 1009*, 1393&; *introducing main clause* C 1636
anende *prep* (a) concerning, with regard to *Pe* 697; ~ **what** as to what *Pe* 186; (b) opposite, facing *Pe* 975; (c) over, across *Pe* 1136
angardes *n gen* of audacity, of arrogance G 681*
angel-havyng *n* behaviour or demeanour of an angel *Pe* 754
anger *n* resentment, indignation *Pe* 343, C 572, *Pa* 411, 481; distress, affliction C 1602, G 2344
angre *adj* fierce, mordant C 1035
anguych *n* anguish *Pa* 325
anious *adj* unpleasant, hard, troublesome G 535
anjoynte *pa ppl* united (in marriage) *Pe* 895*
ankres *n pl* anchors C 418, *Pa* 103
anon *adv* therewith, at once *Pe* 584, C 480, 1741, *Pa* 137, very soon *Pe* 629
anournamentes *n pl* ornaments, furnishings C 1290*
anoynted *pa ppl* consecrated by anointment C 1446, 1497
answar(e) *n* answer *Pe* 518, C 753
answare *v* answer *Pe* 680, G 241, 275; *pres* **answares** G 386, 1044; *pa* **answared** G 1262; see also **sware** (3)
anunder *prep* beneath, under *Pe* 166, 775, C 609; ~ **crowne** wearing a crown *Pe* 1100; ~ **mone** beneath the skies, in the world, at all *Pe* 1068&, **the skues** ~, **the sterres** ~ beneath the skies/stars, on earth C 1206, 1378; *adv* at the base *Pe* 991; underneath C 1409, *Pa*

anyskynnes *adj* any kind of *G* 1539; cf. **kyn**

apassed *pa ppl all ~ date* quite past its due term *Pe* 540

apendes *pres* belongs, is proper (to), pertains *G* 623, 913

apere *v* appear, present oneself *Pe* 405, *G* 911; *pa* **apered** became suddenly visible *C* 1533

apert *adj* skilful *C* 1463; clear to see *G* 2392; *adv* boldly, in a downright manner *Pe* 589; skilfully, neatly *G* 154

apertly see **pertly**

Apokalypce *n* Apocalypse, Book of Revelation *Pe* 787&

apostel *n* apostle *Pe* 790*, 836&

apparayl *n* ornamental scheme *G* 601*

apparaylmente *n* trappings, ornaments *Pe* 1052

apparement *n* accoutrements, furnishings *C* 1270

aproche *v* approach *Pa* 85, *pa* **aproched** *Pe* 1120; arrive at *Pe* 686; *subj* **aproch ... to** *C* 167, 1781, *pa* **aproched to** *G* 1877

approach(ed); **aproche me behoves** I must go there to *C* 68; *imp*

aproche + *inf* go thither to *Pa* 349; **aproche my presense** come into my presence *C* 147, *pres pl* **aprochen to His presense** come into His presence *C* 8

apyke *v* array, deck *C* 1637; *pa ppl* **apyked** arrayed, set finely *C* 1479; **pyked of** set off by, adorned with *Pe* 1036*

aquyle *v* obtain, receive *Pe* 690; *pa* **aquylde** **For** obtained permission for *Pe* 967; cf. **enquylen**

aray *n* setting *Pe* 5; clothing *Pe* 191, *G* 163, 1873; **of lesse ~** of lesser magnificence *Pe* 491

arayed *pa ppl* prepared *G* 1130*, 1134; destined *Pe* 719*; arrayed, dressed *C* 135, 816; fitted out, appointed *C* 812*; laid out *C* 1442, fashioned, constructed *C* 1458, *G* 783; **~ to** arrayed for *Pe* 791; **so mad ~** in so frenzied a state *Pe* 1166*

arayed *pa* questioned *Pa* 191

are *adv* (variant of **ere** (2)) before *G* 1891

arest *v* pause, stay *Pa* 144; *pa* **arest** paused *C* 766

arethede *n* former kingdoms *Pe* 711; cf. **thede**

arewes, arwes *n pl* arrows *G* 1160, 1455

ark *n* (Noah's) ark *C* 317, 329, 335, 357, 411, 413, 479, 485

arme *n* arm *Pe* 459, 466, *G* 2487; *pl* **armes** *C* 643 +

armes *n pl* weapons, arms and/or armour *C* 1773, *G* 281, 567, 590, 631*, 2104, 2437; practice or profession of arms *C* 1306, *G* 204, 1513; deeds of arms *G* 95, 1541

aros *pa* (of 'arise') arose, mounted *Pe* 181

arounde *adv* in circumference *G* 1833

arsoun(e)s *n pl* uptilted front and back parts of a saddle *G* 171, 602

art *2s pres* (of **ben**) **thou ~** you are *Pe* 242 +

arwe *adj* afraid, frightened *G* 241

arwes (1) *2s pres* take fright *G* 2277; *subj* **arwe with** is afraid of *G* 2301; *pa* **arwed** was/were afraid *C* 713, *G* 1463, 2271, **arwede** gave terror to *C* 572

arwes (2) see **arewes**

aryght *adv* right ahead, straight on *Pe* 112; indeed, really and truly *C* 1513, *G* 40, 1911

aryve *v* arrive *Pe* 447

asayled *pa* assailed, assaulted *C* 1188

ascaped *pa* slipped, proceeded unnoticed *C* 1776; slipped from attention *C* 569; cf. **scape** and **eschaped**

ascry *n* alarm, outcry *C* 838, 1206; battle cry *C* 1784

ascryed *pa* shouted, made an outcry *G* 1153; cried abuse on *Pa* 195

asent *n* concord, harmony *Pe* 94; **in** ~ in step, in tandem *C* 788; **in sobre** ~ in seriousness and without discord *Pe* 391; **set in** ~ agreed on *Pa* 177

aske *v* (*pres* 2&3s **askes**, *pl* **asken**; *pa* **asked**) ask(s) (for) *Pe* 316 +; asked from *G* 393; demanded *C* 1742, demands, claims *C* 2, *G* 530; **as ... askes** as is proper to *G* 1327, **as ho** ~ as she requires, as is proper for her *C* 1127

askes *n pl* ashes *C* 626, 736, 1010, 1048, 1292, *Pa* 380, *G* 2

askyng *vn* request, demand *G* 323, 349

aslypped *pa ppl* **was ...** ~ had got away *Pa* 218

asperly *adv* keenly, bitterly *Pa* 373

aspye *v* espy, descry *Pe* 1035; see, find out *G* 1199; *pa ppl* **aspyed**, **aspyet** descried, noticed *Pe* 704, 979; cf. **spye**

assaut *n* assault, armed attack *G* 1, 2525

assemble *n* union, marriage *Pe* 760; *v* **assemble** *C* 1364, *pa* **assembled** *C* 1769; cf. **semble**

assyse *n* manner, style *Pe* 97; practice, tradition *C* 844; **in a good** ~ in proper form *C* 639

astate *n* social status, condition in life *Pe* 393, 490

astel *pa* stole from, escaped *C* 1524; cf. **stele** (3)

astray *adv* **start ...** ~ set off, strike/struck out *Pe* 1162, *G* 1716*

asuagen *v* assuage, soothe *Pa* 3

asure *n* (the colour of) lapis lazuli, enamel made of powdered lapis lazuli *C* 1411, 1457

asyngnes *pres* assigns *G* 1971

athel *adj* (of persons) noble *C* 207, 329, 761, 1314, *G* 241, great *C* 258, 411, *G* 5, 904, 2466; (of things) princely, fine, magnificent *C* 940, 1276, 1443, 1451, *G* 171, 1654

atount *adj* stunned, dazed (as from a blow) *Pe* 179*

a-traverce *adv* across the surface *C* 1473; turning to the side *G* 1700*

atteny *subj* attain; **to ...** ~ come to, arrive at *Pe* 548

attle *v* intend, plan *G* 27; *pa and pa ppl attled* aimed *G* 2263; ordained *C* 207

attlyng *n* intentions *C* 688

atwappe *v* whirl past, escape from *C* 1205*; *pa atwaped* *G* 1167*

Auguste *n* (the month of) August *Pe* 39

aumayl *n* enamel *G* 236; cf. **enaumayld**

auncian *n and adj* (of persons) of considerable age, revered as senior in years and status *G* 948*, 1001, 2463

auncesteres *n gen* ancestor's *C* 258

aunter, **aventure** *n* remarkable incident *G* 27, 29, chivalric adventure *G* 250, 489, 2482*, 2522; *pl aunteres*, **aventures** events *C* 1600, dramatic events, chivalric adventures *G* 95, 491, 2527; **on aunter** at risk, in jeopardy *Pa* 242; **is gon ... in aventure** has gone on an adventure into unfamiliar terrain *Pe* 64*; cf. **aventurus**

auntered *pa* adventured, risked *G* 1516

auter *n* altar *C* 10, *G* 593; table for incense and sacrifice in the Old Testament (prototype of the Christian communion table) *C* 506, 1276, 1443, 1451, 1477

auwhere *adv* anywhere *C* 30

avayed *pa ppl* informed, instructed *Pe* 710; made aware, told *C* 1311

avayment *n* declaration, testimony *C* 1358*

aventure see **aunter**

aventurus *adj* related to chivalric adventure *G* 93

avise *v* devise, contrive *G* 45, 1389; *pa avised* looked at, observed *G* 771; *pa ppl was avised* was minded, intended *C* 1365*

avow *v* vow *Pa* 333; avouch *C* 664

avowes *n pl* avows, promises *Pa* 165

avoy *inter* fie! for shame! *C* 863

avyled *pa and pa ppl* made base, degraded *C* 1713; treated with irreverence, insulted *C* 1151; cf. **vylen**

avysyoun *n* dream-vision *Pe* 1184*

away(e) *adv* away *Pe* 655, 823, *G* 1718, 2119; out of the right way, off course *Pe* 488; on one's way *C* 647*; gone *Pe* 258, *C* 1241, *Pa* 480, 499

awayled *pa* was of avail *C* 408; cf. **vayles**

awelich *adj* awesome, grim *G* 136; cf. **awles** and **awly**

awharf *pa* (remained) turned away *G* 2220

awhyle *adv* for a time *Pe* 692

awles *adj* unawed, unafraid *G* 2335; cf. **awelich**

awly *adv* dreadfully, horribly *C* 874, 937

ayain *adv* (variant of **agayn**) back (again) *C* 665, *G* 815, 1459, 1715, 1728, 2121, 2400, in return *G* 1478, 1981, 2325; *prep* against *G* 2116

ayaynes *prep* (variant of **agayn(e)s**) against *G* 1661

aye *adv* always *Pe* 33 + ; all the while *Pe* 101 + , consistently *C* 117, 276, 337, *G* 562; everywhere *Pe* 44, *C* 1472, *G* 167, 190; in all things *Pe* 366, in all cases *G* 128, 893

ayled *pa* was the matter with, was wrong with *G* 438

ayre (1) *n* heir, successor *C* 52, 650, 666, 1709

ayre (2) *n* air *C* 1010

ayther *adj and pron* either, each *Pe* 831, *Pa* 450, *C* 795, *G* 1356, 1357, 2180; ~ **other** each other *C* 338, 705, *G* 841, 1307, 2472; ~ ... **other** each ... the other *G* 939

aywhere *adv* everywhere *C* 228 + , anywhere *C* 1608, all over *G* 599

baboynes *n pl* grotesque animal forms (as decorative motifs) *C* 1409

bacheleres *n pl* knights *C* 86, *Pa* 366*

badde *adj* bad, wrongful *C* 1228

baft *adv* abaft, from behind *Pa* 148

bagges *n pl* bags, packs *Pa* 158

bak *n* back *C* 155 + ; **bakbon** *G* 1352 backbone; *pl* **bakes** backs *G* 1563

baken *pa ppl* baked *G* 891

baldly *adv* boldly *Pa* 441, *G* 376, 1362; cf **bold(e)**

bale *n* torment, anguish *Pe* 18, 373, 478, 651, 1139, *C* 980, 1256; hardship *Pa* 276; suffering, misery *G* 2419; harm *G* 2041; infliction of harm *C* 276; ~ **wroghte** did evil, committed sin *Pa* 510; *pl* **bales** evils, ills, griefs *Pe* 123, 807

baleful *adj* bent on mischief, disposed to evil *C* 979

bale-hunger *n* dire hunger *C* 1243

baleless *adj* free from evil, innocent *Pa* 227

bale-stour *n* grim struggle (= death throes) *Pa* 426*

balteres *pres* stumbles about *Pa* 459; *pres ppl* **balterande** stumbling, blundering about *C* 103

balwe *adj* swelling, rounded *G* 967*, 2032, 2172

baner *n* banner; pennant (hanging from trumpet) *G* 117; *pl* **baneres** *C* 1404

banne (1) *n* (summons by) proclamation *C* 95, 1361

banne (2) *v* fortify *C* 620*; *pa* **banned** cursed *C* 468, put a curse on *C* 885

banteles *n pl* shelves of masonry projecting from the main wall: (*at the foot*) steps *Pe* 992*; (*at the summit*) parapets *C* 1459*

baptem *n* baptism *Pe* 627, 653

baptysed *pa* conducted baptisms *Pe* 818

barayne *adj* (*of females*) not having borne young *C* 659, *G* 1320

barbe *n* curving edge *G* 2310; *pl* **barbes** barbs (of arrows) *G* 1457

bare *adj* bare; naked *Pa* 374, *C* 1254, *G* 955, 961, 1741, 2256, 2310; unsheathed *C* 1246; uncovered (with leaves *G* 746, 2077; with

water C 452), unopaque *Pe* 1025; unarmed *G* 277, 290; *as intensifier to the ~ erthe* right to the ground C 1693; *as n the ~* the bare flesh C 791; *adv* plainly *G* 465*; **as ~** quite clearly *Pe* 836; **~ two/thre** only two/three C 1573, *G* 1066, 2352, precisely three *G* 1141*

bared *pa ppl* laid bare, revealed C 1149

bare-heved *adj* bare-headed C 633

barely *adv* absolutely *G* 548

barers *n pl* security barriers at the approach to an entrance gate C 1239, 1263

baret *n* combat, battle *G* 21, 353, 2115; strife, distress *G* 752

barme *n* breast, bosom *Pa* 510

barn *n* child *Pe* 426, C 378, 1085; son C 1333, 1709; *pl Barnes* children *Pe* 712, 1040, C 329, 502, 1248, *Pa* 510

barnage *n* youth C 517*

baronage *n* body of barons, peers of a realm C 1424

baroun *n* member of the nobility (holding land in return for military service) ranking above a knight C 1372, 1640; *pl barouns* magnates, noblemen C 82, 1398, 1706, 1715, 1796

barred *pa ppl* provided with ornamental bars or stripes of precious metal *G* 159*, 600

barres *n pl* bars C 884, 963, *Pa* 321; ornamental bars of precious metal *G* 162

base *n* constituent part of a foundation *Pe* 1000; *pl bases* bases C 1278, 1480*

bassyn *n* basin (used at table or in church) C 1145; *pl bassynes* C 1178, 1456*

basteles *gen* of a bastel (= turret projecting from wall or tower) C 1187*; **bastel-roves** turret-rooves *G* 799

basyng *vn* base *Pe* 992

batayl *n* battle, combat *G* 277

bate *n* (shortened form of **debate**) combat, conflict *G* 1461

batede *pa* abated C 440; cf. **abate**

batelment (C 1459), **abataylment** (*G* 790) *n* crenellation, battlements

batered *pa* pounded C 1416

bathes *imp pl* immerse *Pa* 211; *pa and pa ppl bathed* soaked C 1248, *G* 1361

bauderyk *n* baldric, shoulder strap *G* 621, 2486, 2516

bawelyne *n* bowline C 417, *Pa* 104

bawemen *n pl* archers *G* 1564

bay *n* act of cornering a hunted animal, position of an animal so cornered *G* 1450, 1564, 1582

bayen *pres pl* (*pa bayed*) barked *G* 1142, howl(ed) or bay(ed) to proclaim capture of *G* 1362, 1603, 1909

bayle *n* (area within) the outer wall of a castle; precincts of a court or

castle community *Pe* 315, 1083; **bayly** domain, authority *Pe* 442
Bayard *proper n* (popular name for a) horse *C* 886
bayn *adj* ready, willing, obedient *Pe* 807, *Pa* 136, *G* 1092, 2158; *adv* readily, promptly *C* 1511
baysment *n* abashment, confusion, disorientation *Pe* 174
bayst see **abayst**
baytayed *pa ppl* furnished with battlements (for defence) *C* 1183
baythe(n) *v* grant *G* 327, consent to *G* 1840; *pres pl* **baythen** consent, agree *G* 1404
be *pres 2pl* (of 'be') are *Pe* 290, *G* 2440, will be *G* 814, 2111; *subj s or pl* be, can/might/may/should be *Pe* 379 +; *imp* be *C* 1061 +; cf. **ben**
beau *adj* good, fair *Pe* 197; ~ **sir** good sir, fair sir *C* 1622*, *G* 1222*
beaute *n* beauty *Pe* 749, 765, *G* 1273
becom *v* become *C* 1128, *G* 1279; *pres* **becomes** is becoming or appropriate (to) *G* 471, 1491; *pa* **becom** (*Pe* 537), *pl* **become** (*G* 6) became; went *G* 440
bed *n* bed *C* 1765 +, *dat* **bedde** *C* 834, *G* 1179, 1191, 1469, 1990, 2006; **bedside** *G* 1193
bede(n) (1) see **bid(de)**
bede (2) *v* offer *C* 1640; proffer *G* 374, 382; *imp* **bede** give *C* 1507, *Pa* 426, *G* 2322; *pa* **bede** committed *C* 1246; offered *G* 1824, 1834, 1860, 2248; gave *G* 2352; *pa ppl* **boden** tendered (a request), asked for *G* 327
befalle *v* befall, happen *Pe* 186, *G* 1776; *pres* **befalles** *G* 382*; *pa* **befell** came about *C* 1529; *pa ppl* **is befallen** has happened *C* 1563, 1629
before *conj* before *Pe* 530; *prep* in front of *Pe* 49 +; in or into the presence of *C* 1274&, *G* 347&; before *G* 1674; in preference to *G* 1275, more than *G* 1781; *adv* in front *G* 422, ahead *Pe* 1110, higher up *C* 114; at the front *G* 1741, from in front *C* 918; before that time *Pe* 172*, *C* 1152 +, **beforne** *G* 1577
begynne *v* (*pres 2s* **begynnes** *Pe* 561, *3s* **begines**, *pl* **begynes**; *imp* **begyn**; *pa* **began**, *pl* **begonne**; *pa ppl* **begonne**) begin(s), began *Pe* 547 +; starts, started *C* 1337, *Pa* 137; starts to react *C* 280, started to speak *C* 749; takes up *C* 359*; **is ... begonne** takes its origin *Pe* 33
begynner *n* beginner, originator, source *Pe* 436
beholde *v* behold, look (at) *Pe* 810, *C* 64, 607, *G* 232, 1187; *pres* **beholdes** sees, looks upon *C* 1423, looks at *C* 150, *G* 250; *pa* **behelde** *C* 452, *G* 794; *pres ppl* **beholdand** looking at *C* 1544; *pa ppl* **beholden** in duty bound *G* 1547, **beholde** beholden, obliged *G* 1842
behoves *impers v* it is necessary *C* 554, *G* 1754; **me/thee behoves** I/you must *Pa* 46 +, it behoves me to *Pa* 529; *pa* **behoved** was

- necessary, had to *Pa* 151, *G* 1959, **him** ~ he had to *C* 398, *Pa* 465, *G* 717, 1771, 2040, **Yow** ~ it would be necessary for you to *Pe* 928; see also **bos** (2)
- beke** *n* beak *C* 487
- beknowe** *v* confess *G* 2385; 3s *pres* **beknowes** reveals *G* 2495; *pa* **beknew** acknowledged, revealed *G* 903; owned the truth of *C* 1327; *pa ppl* **beknownen of** confessed *G* 2391
- bekyr** *n* large drinking vessel *C* 1474
- bele** *v* burn, become inflamed *Pe* 18
- bem** *n* beam (of wood), cross *Pe* 814; ray (of light) *C* 603, *pl* **bemes** *G* 1819
- ben** (**bene** *G* 141, 677) (a) *pa ppl* been *Pe* 252 +; **had ben** (it/I/he) would have been *Pe* 1194, *G* 680, 725, 2264; (b) *pres pl* (*indicative or subj*) are *Pe* 572 +; will be *G* 1646; cf. **be**
- bench** *n* bench at meal-table: (**up**)on/fro (**the/this**) ~ at/from table *C* 130&, *G* 351&
- bende** (1) *n* (*heraldic*) diagonal band *G* 2506*, 2517
- bende** (2) *pa* bent; **bende ... browes** frowned *G* 305*; *pa ppl* **bent** bowed, submitted *Pe* 1189; curved *G* 2224; fastened, set *Pe* 1017; assigned *Pe* 664; **bende** brought about *G* 2115
- bene** (1) *adj* fair, goodly *Pe* 110, *Pa* 418, *G* 2475; *adv* fairly, properly *Pe* 198, *G* 2402, 2475
- bene** (2) see **ben**
- bent** (1) *n* uncultivated field, grassland *C* 532, 1675, grass *Pa* 392; field, battlefield, hunting field *G* 353*, 1465, 2115&, **bent-felde** 1136*; **to bent** to the shore *G* 1599
- bent** (2) see **bende**
- ber** *n* beer *G* 129
- berd(e)** *n* beard *C* 1693, *G* 182, 306, 334, 845, 2228
- berdlesse** *adj* beardless *C* 789, *G* 780
- bere** *v* (*pres* **beres**, *pl* **beres**, **bere(n)**; *subj* **bere** *Pe* 466; *pa* **bere**) bear, bore *C* 1042, 1273, 1480, *G* 637, 2151, 2506; suffer, endure *Pe* 807; carry, carried *C* 1412, *G* 265, 1913, 2066, 2261; give/gave birth to *Pe* 426, *C* 649; bear (fruit) *Pe* 1078, 1079, *C* 1042; wear, wore *Pe* 746, 756, 854, 856, *G* 2485, 2529; has *Pe* 100, 1068, had, possessed *G* 1819; **lif bere(s)** has/have life *C* 333, 1023, *G* 1229; **bere thyself** conduct yourself *C* 582; **beres wyttensse** bear witness *G* 2523; *imp pl* **beres** take, convey *Pa* 211; *pres ppl* **berande** carrying *C* 1405; **bere on** offered pressingly to *G* 1860*; **I bere the face** I turned my steps *Pe* 67; **bere to** bore down on *Pa* 148; **bere ... on lofte** raised *C* 1273, *G* 2261; *pa ppl* **born(e)**, **bore** born *Pe* 239 +, borne *G* 1616, 2070
- beres** *n pl* bears *G* 722
- berwe** *n* tumulus, barrow *G* 2172, 2178

beryl *n* beryl, a clear, crystalline stone *Pe* 110, 1011, *C* 554, 1132

beryng *vn* bearing, demeanour *C* 1060, 1132

bes *pres* with future sense will be *Pe* 611, *Pa* 333; *imp pl* be *C* 904

beseche *v* beseech *Pe* 390 +, *G* 341*; *pres* **beseches** *G* 1881; *pa*

bisoght(e) *G* 96, 1834, 1862, *pl* **bisoghten** *Pa* 375

best (1) *n* (wild) beast, animal *C* 288 +; *pl* **bestes** *Pe* 886 +; *gen pl* **bestene** *C* 1446

best(e) (2) *adj and adv* best *Pa* 164, 277, *C* 1060, *G* 73², 78, 1563, 2021, 2521, highest ranking *G* 73¹, greatest, of highest quality *Pe* 863; as *n* **the** ~ the best one(s) *Pa* 437, *G* 863, the best man *G* 1645, the chief soldiers *C* 1242, the chief knights *G* 550, those of highest status *C* 114, 135, 1179, 1202, *G* 1325, those who perform the best *G* 986, the best course of course of action *C* 913, *G* 1216; **of the** ~ of the best kind, rank or quality *C* 170, *G* 38, 880, 1000*, 1145, with the best materials *G* 889; **my blýsful** ~ my excellent and delighting one *Pe* 279

bete (1) *n* the action or sound of beating *Pa* 302

bete (2) *v* amend, better; provide a remedy for *Pe* 757; *imp* **bete** mend, refurbish (a fire) *C* 627; *pa ppl* **bette** kindled *C* 1012, *G* 1368; cf. **bote**

betes *pres* **betes on** bombards *C* 1263; *pa* **bete** beat *C* 1292, *pl*

bete(n) flapped *Pe* 93, beat *G* 1437; *pa ppl* **beten** beaten *C* 1787;

inlaid, studded *G* 78, 1833, 2028; **beten fro** driven from *Pa* 248

bette see **bete** (2)

beverage *n* alcoholic drink, liquor *C* 1433, 1717, *G* 1112, 1409

beyng *pres ppl* being, inhering *Pe* 446

bibbes *pres* swills, tipples *C* 1499

bid(de) *v* bid, order *Pa* 51, *G* 344, 1089; *pres* **biddes**, *pl* **bidden**

command(s) *Pe* 520 +, adjures *G* 370; *pa* **bede**, *pa ppl* **bede(n)** bade *C* 130, *G* 2090, ordered *Pe* 715 +

bide(n) *v* (*pres* **bides**, *pl* **bide(s)**; *pa* **bod(e)**, *pl* **biden**) (a) abide, experience *G* 520*; endure, suffer *Pe* 664, *C* 32, *G* 290, 374, 2041;

(b) wait *Pe* 977, *Pa* 435, await(s) *C* 622, *G* 376, 2292, **bod to** waited for *C* 467; dwell *Pa* 318, *G* 1092, remain in place, stay *Pe* 399; stayed (there) *C* 616, 1243; stay stationary *C* 449; stands *G* 1585; remains *C* 604, *Pa* 293, *G* 1366; abided, remained *Pe* 62, *C* 982, 1030, *G* 785; was/were situated *Pa* 343, *G* 1699; stand, are placed *Pe* 75; **bide at the bay** *G* 1582, **bode in his bay** *G* 1564 stand/stood at bay, **bides the bay** stands his ground *G* 1450; cf. **abide**

big(ge) *adj* sturdy, strong *C* 1190, 1377, *Pa* 302, *G* 554; powerful *C* 229; forcible *C* 43; big *Pe* 102; *comp* **bigger** stronger *Pe* 374, *G* 2101; *super* **biggest** strongest *C* 276, most powerfully built *C* 1335

bigge, bigly *adv* sturdily, strongly *C* 1183, *G* 1141, 1584; firmly *Pa*

321, G 1162
bigges *pres* builds, founds G 9; *pa and pa ppl* **bigged** built, constructed C 1666, *Pa* 124*; founded, established G 20; *pa pl* **bult** settled G 25
bigraven *pa ppl* engraved all around, be-etched G 216
bigyled *pa ppl* tricked G 2413, 2416, 2427
bihinde *prep* behind C 653&; *adv* behind C 155, at the back G 607, 1350, 1741; from behind C 918; inferior G 1942
bihyght *pa and pa ppl* promised *Pa* 29, 408
bikennes *pres* consigns, hands over C 1296, *pl* **bikennen**, *pa* **bikende**: **kenne(n)** (G 2067, 2472), **bikennen/bikende to God/Cryst** (G 596, 1307, 1982) commend(ed) to God, say/said goodbye
bileved *pa* stayed, remained C 659*, 1549
birlen *pres pl* pour out (drink) C 1511; *pa ppl* **birled ... to** poured out for C 1715
bischop *n* bishop G 112; *gen* **bischofes** high priest's C 1445*, 1718
biseged *pa* besieged, laid siege to C 1180
biseme *v* befit, become *Pe* 310; *pres* **bisemes** beseems, is proper G 1612; suits, befits G 2191; *pa* **bisemed** suited, became, looked well on G 622, 2035
biside *prep* beside G 109, 1657, 2172, by, near G 1030; **him ~** right by him *Pa* 343, by his side G 1083, sideways G 2265; **layd him ~** deflected from himself G 1777; *adv* close by G 1582, 2088
bisides *adv* at the sides, on either side G 76, 856; in the vicinity G 2164, beside it G 2230
bisoght(e)(n) see **beseche**
bispeke *pa* spoke out, expressed an opinion *Pa* 169
bitaght see **biteche**
bite *v* bite G 1598; eat *Pe* 640; graze C 1675, *pres* **bites** C 532, *subj* **bite** *Pa* 392; arouse *Pe* 355; **of ... bite** lodge in G 1457*, **bote on** lodged in G 426, 1162; *pa* **bote** slashed (with tusks), broke G 1563; **bited** stung, caused smarting *Pa* 373; *pa ppl* **biten** bitten C 1047, gnawed C 1243
biteche *v* hand over C 871; *pa* **bitaght** commended, committed *Pe* 1207, C 528
bithenkkes *pres* bethinks; *refl ~* **hym ... to** decides to C 1357; *imp* **bithenk thee** ask yourself C 582, consider the matter *Pa* 495; *pa* **him bithoghte** decided C 125
bitidde see **bityde**
bitte *n* blade, cutting edge G 212, 426, 2224, 2310
bitter *adj* bitter C 1022; *adv* **bitterly** sharply, severely C 468
bitwene *prep* among, between *Pe* 140 +; *adv* here and there, at intervals C 1383, 1463, G 791, 795; thereamong, among them *Pe* 44, C 951, 1472; in between C 637
bityde *v* betide, befall *Pe* 397 (*subj* C 522, G 1893, 2054, 2195, 2383,

2409); happen *Pa* 220; *pres* **bitydes** *C* 1804; *pa* **bitidde** betided, befell *C* 1647, *G* 2522; happened, transpired *C* 1657, *Pa* 61

biwyled *pa ppl* tricked *G* 2425

biyonde *prep* on the far side of *Pe* 141&, *G* 2200

blak(e) *adj* dark, black *Pe* 945, *C* 221, 747, 1017, *G* 961, lustreless *G* 958*; wicked *C* 1449; as *n* **the** ~ the black matter *C* 1009

blame (1) *n* criticism; reproach, rebuke *Pe* 715, *C* 43, *G* 1779; guilt, blameworthiness *C* 260, *G* 361, 1488, 2500; mark of blame, stigma *G* 2506

blame (2) *v* blame *Pe* 303, *G* 2368; disparage *C* 1661*; find fault with *C* 877; *pres* **thou blames** you accuse *Pe* 275

blande *n* mixture; **in** ~ mingled together *G* 1205; thereamidst *C* 885; cf. **blende** (1)

blasfemy *n* verbal insult or irreverence to God *C* 1661, 1712

blaste *n* blast (of wind) *G* 784; *pl* **blastes** blasts (from wind instruments) *C* 1783, *G* 1148

blauuner *n* costly kind of fur *G* 155*, 573, 856, 1931

ble *n* colour *Pe* 76, lustre *C* 1126, 1759*; skin colour *C* 791, facial colour, complexion *Pe* 212

bleaunt *n* costly silk fabric *G* 879; over-garment, mantle *Pe* 163*, *G* 1928

bleden *pres pl* bleed *G* 1163; *pa* **bledde** bled *G* 441

blemyst *pa* blemished, impaired *C* 1421

blench *n* trick, stratagem *C* 1202

blenched *pa* shied away, changed direction *G* 1715

blende (1) *pa* blended, mingled *C* 1788; ~ **in** went into, suffused *G* 2371; *pa pl subj* **blenden** immersed *Pa* 227; *pa ppl* **blent** blended, merged, mingled *Pe* 385, 1016, *G* 1361, 1610, **blende** faced, trimmed *G* 1931*; cf. **blande**

blende (2) see **blynne**

blended *pa ppl* rendered morally blind *G* 2419*

blenke *v* gleam *G* 2135; *pa* **blenked** shone, gleamed *G* 799

blent see **blende** (1)

blesse *v* **thyselven** ~ bless your fate *Pe* 341; *pres* **blesse** *C* 528, *subj* **blesse** *Pe* 850; *pa* **blessed** blessed *C* 470, *G* 1296*; **blessed him** crossed himself *G* 2071; *pa ppl* **blessed** blessed *Pe* 436, *C* 686, 733; consecrated *C* 1445, 1718

blessyng *vn* blessing, benediction *Pe* 1208, *G* 370

blisse *n* joy *Pe* 123 +; heavenly bliss *Pe* 478 +; celebration, rejoicing *C* 1765, *G* 825; cf. **blysful**

blo *adj* of sombre or dull colour *Pe* 83; dark, livid *Pe* 875, (*of water*) *C* 1017, *Pa* 134, 138, 221

blod *n* blood *Pe* 646 +; temperament, spirits *G* 89*, 286; blood relationship, kinship *G* 357; race, nation *C* 686

blodhounds *n pl* large hunting-dogs *G* 1436

bloody *adj* covered with blood *Pe* 705

blom *n* excellence *Pe* 578; *pl* **blomes** blooms, flowers *Pe* 27, *C* 1042, 1467

blonk(e) *n* horse, steed *G* 434, 785, 1581, 2074, 2475; *gen* ~ **sadel** horse's saddle *G* 2012; *pl* **blonkes** *C* 87, 1392, *G* 1128, 1693; *gen pl* **blonkene** *C* 1412

blossumes *n pl* blossoms *G* 512

blowe (1) *v* bloom *G* 512

blowe (2) *v* blow *C* 437, *Pa* 138; *pres* **blowes** *G* 1465; *imp pl* **blowes** blow *Pa* 134; *pa* **blw** (**blowed** *G* 1913) blew *C* 885, *G* 1141, 1362; *vn* **blowyng** (act of) blowing *G* 1601

bluber *n* bubbling or seething water *Pa* 221, 266

blubrande *pres ppl* seething *C* 1017; *pa* **blubred** bubbled, seethed *G* 2174

blunt *adj* obtuse, uncomprehending, dazed *Pe* 176

blusch (1) *n* look, glance *G* 520

blusch (2) *v* look *C* 904; *pres ppl* **bluschande** shining *G* 1819; *pa* **blusched** looked *C* 980, 988, ~ **(up)on** cast eyes on, set eyes on *Pe* 980*, 1083, *C* 982, *G* 793, ~ **(there)to** looked upon/towards (it) *C* 1537, *Pa* 343, 474, *G* 650, ~ **ful brode** could see far and wide *Pa* 117

blustered *pa* strayed without direction *C* 886

blw see **blowe** (2)

blykkande *pres ppl* gleaming, shining *G* 305, 2485; *pa* **blykked** shone *C* 603, glistened *G* 429

blyknande *pres ppl* gleaming, shining *C* 1467; *pa* **blykned** grew pale, faded *C* 1759*

blynde *adj* not easily visible, dim *Pe* 83*; unable to see *C* 103, 584, 886, 1094, *Pa* 124

blyndes *pres* loses brightness *C* 1126

blynne *v* cease, come to an end *Pe* 729, *C* 440; *pres* **blynnes** desists, refrains *C* 1661; ends *C* 1812; *imp* **blynne** *G* 2322; *pa* **blende** *C* 967*

blysfyl *adj* blissful *Pe* 409, 738; producing delight (aesthetic, bodily, or emotional), beautiful *Pe* 907, 964, 1104, *C* 1075, *G* 520; **my** ~ **best** my excellent and delighting one *Pe* 279; *as n* you who enjoy heavenly bliss *Pe* 421; blessed one *Pe* 1100; cf. **blisse**

blysnande *pres ppl* shining *Pe* 163, 197, glittering *C* 1404; *pa* **blysned** shone *Pe* 1048

blythe (1) *n* favour, good will *Pe* 354

blythe (2) *adj* glad, happy *Pe* 352, *C* 1706, *G* 1217, 1398, 2321; complaisant *G* 1273, gracious, beneficent *C* 1228; welcome *Pa* 107; beautiful *C* 1085, *G* 155, 162; ~ **of** glad of *Pa* 459, *G* 922; ~ **of**

mod blissful in spirit *Pe* 738; *super* **blythest** most beneficent *Pe* 1131; as *n* **the ~** the complaisant man *G* 1213

blythe (3), **blythely** *adv* readily, quickly *G* 1311, 1684; **blythely** happily, joyfully *Pe* 385; in a celebratory manner *C* 82, 1718; comfortably *G* 1990; beautifully, fairly *C* 1718; earnestly, eagerly *G* 1834

bobaunce *n* vain display, arrogance *C* 179, insolent ostentation *C* 1712; splendour, pomp *G* 9

bode (1) *n* command, bidding *C* 979, *Pa* 56, 75, 134, 852

bode (2) *n* what is offered, offered object *G* 1824

bod(e) see **bide**

boden see **bede** (2)

bodworde *n* news, announcement *C* 473

body *n* (human) body *Pe* 62 +; material form *Pe* 1070; person *C* 32, 260, *G* 357; **of ~ and of dedes** in person and behaviour *C* 1061; *pl* **bodies** persons *Pa* 387, *G* 353

bodyly *adj* bodily, physical *Pe* 478; in the body *Pe* 1090

boghe *n* bough *C* 616; *pl* **boghes** boughs, tree-branches *C* 1467, *G* 765, 2077; arms (of a candlestick) *C* 1481*

boght see **bye** (2)

boghted *part adj* curved *Pa* 449*

boke *n* book *Pe* 837, *C* 197, 966, *G* 690, 2521; the Book, the Bible *Pe* 710; *pl* **Brutus bokes** books of British history *G* 2523

boke-lered *adj* text-skilled, learned *C* 1551

bold(e) *adj* bold *C* 1333&, *G* 272&; over-bold, shameless *Pe* 806; fine, excellent *C* 789, 1372, *G* 843; **bes never so ~ to** don't dare to *C* 906; as *n* **the bold** the fine man *C* 811, **bolde** bold men *G* 21

bolde *adv* immediately, directly *G* 2476; cf. **boldly**

bole *n* tree-trunk *C* 622, *G* 766; *pl* **boles** *Pe* 76

bolkes see **bulk**

bolle *n* bowl (vessel used at table or in church) *C* 1145, 1474; *pl* **bolles** *C* 1511

bolled *pa ppl* (of 'bolle') embossed *C* 1464

bolne *v* swell *Pe* 18; *pres pl* **bolne** *G* 512; *pres ppl* **bolnande** swelling, tumid *C* 179; *pa* **bolned** swelled *C* 363

bon *n* bone *Pe* 212; *pl* **bones** *C* 1040, *G* 424, 1344

bonde *adj* as *n* bondsmen *C* 88

bone *n* prayer, request *Pe* 912, 916; gift, favour *G* 327; bidding, command *C* 826, *Pa* 136; what is given or sent, experience *Pe* 1090*

boner *adj* (shortened form of **debonere**) gracious *C* 733*

bonerte *n* goodness, benignity *Pe* 762

bonk(e) *n* bank of river or moat *Pe* 1169, *G* 700, 785; slope bordering water, shore *Pe* 196*, 907 +; slope, incline, hillside *Pe* 102, *C* 379, *G* 710; **by ~** over banks *G* 511; *pl* **bonkes** (**bonk** *C* 379, *Pa* 343)

- banks *Pe* 106 + ; hills, hillsides *C* 379 + ; **bonkes egges** tops of the banking hills *C* 383
- bor** *n* boar *G* 1441, 1448, 1590, 1606; *gen* **bores** boar's *G* 1616; *pl* **bores** boars *C* 55, *G* 722
- borde** (1) *n* wood *C* 1190; table *C* 1433, 1717, *G* 481; side of a ship *Pa* 211, **bynne** ~ inside the ship *C* 452, 467, **up(on)** ~ up on deck *C* 470, *Pa* 190
- borde** (2) *n* (ornamental or embroidered) band *G* 610*; *pl* **bordes** embroidered strips of material *G* 159, 610*
- bore** see **bere**
- bores** see **bor**
- borges** *n pl* burgesses, citizens *Pa* 366*
- borlych(e)** *adj* burly, stout *G* 766, 1441*, 2148, 2224; imposing, fine *C* 1488
- born(e)** see **bere**
- borne** *n* water course: stream *G* 731, 1570, *gen* **bornes** stream's *Pe* 974; (body of) water *C* 482, *Pa* 302, *G* 2174
- borst** see **brestes**
- bos** (1) *n* manger or stall (for livestock) *C* 1075*
- bos** (2) *impers v* (contracted form of **behoves**) must *Pe* 323, *G* 1216*

bost *n* ostentatious noise and/or display C 179, 1450; defiance C 1712, threats G 1448

boster *n* big talker, 'loud mouth' C 1499

bot (1) *n* boat C 473*, Pa 145, 184, 248, 266, 292

bot (2) *adv and prep* only Pe 17 +, merely Pe 83, 269, C 1145, G 30; except for Pe 312 +, nothing except, only Pe 382 +; *conj* but Pe 66 +, but that Pa 176, other than (to/that) G 763, 2312, except C 1682 +; unless Pe 308, 331, 428, 723, 972, G 716, 1210, 1300; ~ **if** unless C 1110, 1360, Pa 83, G 1956, except that G 1054

bote (1) *n* remedy Pe 645, Pa 163, solution to a problem Pe 275, C 1616; **by** ~ as safety requires C 944*; cf. **bete** (2)

bote (2) see **bite**

bothe *n* small constructed shelter Pa 441*

both(e) *conj, adj and pron* both Pe 90 +; *adv* as well C 11, 187, 1222, G 129, 155, 268, 484

bothom *n* bottom Pa 184, 449; sea-bottom C 1030, Pa 144, 253, 313; valley-bottom C 383, G 2145, *pl* **bothemes** C 450

bothomles *adj* bottomless C 1022

botouns *n pl* studs G 220

boun *adj* prepared, ready Pe 534, G 852, 1311; armed G 2043*; in position Pe 992, 1103; ~ **to** bound for G 548*

bounden see **bynde**

bounte *n* good qualities, excellence C 1436, Pa 418, G 357; *pl* **bountees** deeds of prowess G 1519*

bour *n* bower, dwelling place Pa 276, 437; chamber within a house or mansion Pe 964, C 129, 1075, 1126, G 853, 1519; *pl* **boures** small rooms C 322

bourde (1) *n* jest G 1409; *pl* **bourdes** jests, joking words G 1212, 1954

bourde (2) *pres pl* speak in jest Pe 290; *pa* **bourded** joked, spoke jestingly G 1217

bourdyng *vn* playful or joking talk G 1404

bout(e) *prep* without C 260, Pa 523, G 361, 1285*, 2353; **be** ~ go without C 824

bow *v* (*pres* **bowes**) proceed(s), go(es) Pe 196 +; *pres pl* **bowen** G 2077; *imp* **bow** Pe 974, *pl* **bowes** C 944; *pa* **bowed** made (my, her, his, their) way, directed (my, etc) course Pe 126, C 379&, G 481&, ~ **him to** went towards him C 1706, ~ **thereto** went to that place G 1325, ~ **him after** followed him C 1796*, ~ **under** went in under Pa 441

bowe *v* (*pa ppl* **bowed**) bow, defer to, acknowledge the authority of C 1746*, obey C 944*, **bowe(d) to His bode** obey(ed) His command Pa 56, 75

bowel *n* part of the entrails *Pa* 293; *pl* **boweles** entrails *C* 1251, *G* 1333, 1609

boy *n* commoner, ‘nobody’ *C* 878; *pl* **boyes** ruffians *Pe* 806

boyles *pres* seethes, boils *C* 1011; *pa* and *pa ppl* **boyled** boiled *G* 2174; bubbled, seethed *G* 2082

braches see **rach**

brad *pa ppl* grilled, roasted *G* 891; cf. **brede**s

brad(e) see **brod(e)**

bradde see **brede** (4)

braken *n* bracken, ferns *C* 1675

brakes *pres* vomits *Pa* 340; cf. **brych**

brasse *n* brass *C* 1271, 1443, 1480; brass instruments (bugles, trumpets, etc) *C* 1783

braste see **brestes**

brath *n* violent impetus *Pe* 1170; force, power *C* 916; *pl* **brathes** (inner) storms, violent feelings *Pe* 346*

braunch(e) *n* spray or branch of a tree *C* 487, *G* 265, 2177; *pl* **braunches** *C* 1464, 1482

braundysch *subj* (of an animal) toss with head or limbs, thrash about *Pe* 346*

brawne *n* meaty tissue (especially of a boar) *G* 1611, 1631

bray *subj* (of an animal) cry, bellow, roar *Pe* 346*; *pres pl* **brayen** bray *G* 1163

brayd (1) *n* sudden movement or speech, outburst *C* 1507; **at a ~** in one sudden movement, instantly *C* 539

brayd(e) (2) see **braydes**

brayden *pa ppl* intertwined, interlinked *G* 580*; decoratively inset *G* 1833, 2319; wrought, (ornamentally) fashioned *G* 177*, 220, **~ of gold** wrought out of gold *C* 1481; **braydene perles** interlinked pearls or pearls used to embroider cloth *C* 1132

braydes *pres* takes hold of *G* 621; **~ out** draws out *G* 1609, (a sword) *G* 1584, 1901, 2319; *pa* **brayd(e)**, *pl* **brayden** drew, pulled, turned *G* 440, 1339; sprang, dashed, spurted *G* 429; presented *Pe* 712*, handed *G* 2377; **out of my dreame me brayd** roused me from my dream *Pe* 1170; **brayde ner wod** went nearly mad *C* 1558*; *pa ppl* **brayde** drawn *G* 781*, 2069

brayn (1) *n* brain(s) *C* 1248, 1421, 1788; mind *G* 89; *pl* **braynes** brains, thoughts, mind *Pe* 126

brayn (2) *adj* furious, berserk *G* 286*

braynwod *adj* frenzied, berserk *G* 1461, 1580

bred *n* bread *Pe* 1209, *C* 620, 636, 1105, *G* 1361, 1610; pastry *G* 891

brede, **bredden** see **brede** (3)

brede (1) *n* board, plank *Pa* 184; *pl* **brede**s *G* 2071

brede (2) *n* breadth *Pe* 1031, *C* 316, *Pa* 353

brede (3) *v* grow, be in bloom *Pe* 415*; *pres ppl bredande* growing *C* 1482; *pa bredde* begot, brought forth *C* 257; *pa pl bredden* were bred *G* 21

brede (4) *v* spread, stretch *Pe* 814; *pa bradde to* stretched to, reached *G* 1928; **ibrad** overspread *C* 1693

bredes *n pl* roasted meats *C* 1405; cf. **brad**

brek *pa* broke *C* 1105; breached, broke into *C* 1239, *G* 1333; was uttered *G* 1764; *pa pl breken* *G* 1564; broke into foam *G* 2082

brem(e) *adj* fierce, keen *Pe* 346, *C* 229, *G* 1580; angry *Pa* 430; vigorous, sturdy *G* 1155, 1601; intense *Pe* 863, *G* 2200, unrestrained *G* 1142; large *G* 2145; *adv* firmly *G* 781*

bremly, **bremlyche** *adv* keenly, intensely, vigorously *C* 509, *G* 509; fiercely *G* 1598, 1909, 2233, 2319; at once, directly *G* 779

brenne *v* burn *Pa* 472; *pres brennes* burns *C* 916; cooks *G* 1609; *pres ppl brennande* burning *C* 1012; *pa brenned* burned *C* 509, *Pa* 477, *G* 832, 875, **brent** glowed *Pe* 106, **brend ... in askes** burned to ashes *C* 1292; *pa ppl brent* (*G* 2), **brenned** (*C* 959) burnt, **brende gold** gold refined by fire, pure gold *Pe* 989, *C* 1456, 1488, *G* 195

brent *adj* steep *G* 2165; *super brentest* *C* 379

brere-flour *n* flower of the dog rose (a species of wild rose) *C* 791*

breres *n pl* thistly plants, briars *C* 1694

bresed *pa* bristled *C* 1694*; *pa ppl* bristly, bushy *G* 305

brest (1) *n* breast, chest *Pe* 18 +

brest (2) *n* infliction of injury *C* 229

brestes *pres s and pl* burst(s) *C* 1783, ~ **up** throws open *C* 1263; *pa borst* burst *C* 1251; **braste** broke *Pa* 148, ~ **up** broke open *C* 963; *pa pl bursten* split *Pa* 221; *pa ppl brusten* crashed apart *G* 1166

breth *n* breath *C* 916, air in motion, wind *C* 967, *Pa* 107, 145; fume *C* 509; *pl brethes* winds *Pa* 138

breve *v* say, tell *G* 1393, *pres pl* 1488, *imp breve* *Pe* 755; *pa ppl breved* written *G* 2521, recorded *C* 197; spoken of, referred to *G* 465; announced (by baying) *G* 1436

breythed *pa* breathed, rose as vapour *C* 1421*

brittenes *pres* cuts, chops *G* 1611; *pa brittened* broke into, cut open *G* 1339; *pa ppl brittened* broken apart, shattered *G* 2; (of human body) hacked *G* 680*

brod(e), (**brade** *Pe* 138) *adj* broad, wide *Pe* 650 +; extensive *C* 603, *G* 14, spacious *C* 129, 1377; easily visible, plain *C* 584; **many a ~ day** many a long day *C* 659; ~ **yates** large main gates or gateway *C* 854, *G* 2069; *adv* broadly, widely *C* 1392, *Pa* 117, 472, *G* 2233; with eyes wide open *G* 446

brought(e) see **brynge**

brok *n* brook, stream *Pe* 141, 146, *G* 2200, *gen brokes* stream's *Pe* 1074, *pl brokes* *G* 2082; water *Pa* 145

brom *n* (the plant) broom *Pa* 392*

bronde *n* sword *C* 1246, *G* 561, 588, 828, 1584, 1901, 2032, 2041

brondes *n pl* wood for burning *C* 1012; bits of burning *or* charred wood *G* 2

brothe *adj* (cf. **brath** *n*) fierce, savage *C* 1409, *G* 1909, 2233; angry *C* 149

brothely *adv* roughly *C* 1256; angrily *G* 2377; suddenly, quickly *Pa* 474; fully *C* 1030

brothelyche *adj* unmoderated, loud *C* 848

brother *n* kinsman *C* 772*; *pl* **brether** companion members *G* 39

brotherhede *n* brotherhood *G* 2516

broun *adj* dark *Pe* 537, *G* 879; (*of metals, etc*) shining *Pe* 990, *G* 426, 618; as *n* **the** ~ the brown deer-hides *G* 1162

browe *n* brow *G* 1457, 2306; *pl* **browes** eyebrows *C* 1694, *G* 305, 961

bruny *n* byrnie, coat of mail *G* 580*, 861, 2012, 2018

brurdes *n pl* surfaces *C* 1474

brurdful *adj* filled to the brink *C* 383

brusten see **brestes**

bruxles *pres* speaks shamingly to, reproaches *Pa* 345*

brych *n* vomit *C* 848*; cf. **brakes**

bryd *n* bride *Pe* 769

brydale *n* wedding feast *C* 142

bryddes *n pl* birds *Pe* 93, *C* 288, 1482, *G* 166, 509, 610, 746

brydel *n* bridle *G* 177, 434, 600, 2052; *pl* **brydeles** *G* 1131

brygge *n* bridge, drawbridge *C* 1187, *G* 781, 821, 2069; ~ **ende** point where the drawbridge comes down when lowered *G* 779

bryght(e) *adj and adv* bright(ly), vivid, beautiful *Pe* 75+; as *n* fair one *Pe* 755 (*in address*), **that** ~ that fair creature *C* 470; *comp* **bryghter** brighter *Pe* 1056, *C* 1132, *G* 236; *super* **bryghtest** most beautiful *G* 1283, most splendidly *C* 114

brym(me) *n* water's edge *Pe* 232, *G* 2172; shore, bank *Pe* 1074, *C* 365

bryng(e) *v* bring *Pe* 853+; *pres* 2s (*C* 1633) and 3s (*C* 811, *G* 1112) **brynges**; *imp* **bryng** *Pe* 963, *C* 473, 1433, *Pa* 426, *G* 2284, *pl* **brynges** *C* 82; *subj* **bryng** *Pa* 75, *G* 2530; *pa and pa ppl* **broght(e)** *Pe* 286+, *pa pl* **broghten** brought *C* 86, 1375, *G* 862; conduct(ed), escort(ed) *G* 825, 853, 1990

brynkes *n pl* brinks, upper edges *C* 384

buffet *n* blow *C* 43, 885*, *G* 382, 1754, 2343; *pl* **buffetes** *Pe* 808

bukkes *n pl* bucks, male fallow deer *C* 392, *G* 1155*

bulde see **bylde**

bulk *n* enclosed area; ~ **of the bot** the ship's hold *Pa* 292; *pl* **bolkes** stalls *C* 322*

bull *n* bull *C* 1682, *pl* **bulles** *C* 55, 392, *G* 722

bur *n* force of wind *Pa* 148; forceful assault, forceful blow(s) *Pe* 176,

- 1158, G 548, 2322; force, power G 2261; (**a**)**bide(n) the ~** to stand or accept the blow or shock G 290, 374, (*of misfortune or unwelcome visitations*) C 32, Pa 7
- burde** (1) *n* well-born woman, lady C 378&, G 613, 961, 1003, 1010, 1779, 1846, (= Mary) 752; *pl* **burdes** C 80&
- burde** (2) *pa* of *impers* *v* it behoved; would be bound to Pa 507; **me ~ be** I should be G 2278, 2428; **~ him be** he should have been Pa 117; *subj* **thee ~** it would have been fitting for you to Pe 316
- burgh** *n* 'borough', city Pe 957&, C 834&, Pa 366, 387, 516, G 2, 9; (fortified) dwelling place, castle estate C 45, 63, 82, G 259&; **in uch a ~** everywhere C 1061
- burn(e)** *n* man Pe 397+, (*in address*) C 142, G 1071, 2284, 2322, *gen* **burnes** man's G 1616, *pl* **burnes** Pe 712+; servant C 616
- burnist** *pa ppl* rubbed clean so as to shine, polished Pe 77, 990, C 554, 1085, G 212, 582; given a shine by the addition of bright metals or stones Pe 220*
- bursten** see **brestes**
- burthen** *n* burden, load C 1439
- busch** (1) *n* act of striking, impact C 1416*
- busch** (2) *v* push, press; **~ up ful brode** flare up (to shine) most widely Pa 472; *pa* **busched** fell sharply Pa 143
- busied** see **busy**
- busily** *adv* earnestly G 68, 1824; zealously C 1446
- busk** *n* bush G 182; *pl* **buskes** G 1437
- buske** *v* **~ me** array myself G 1220; *pres* **buskes** prepares, proceeds G 2476, **~ him** addresses himself C 633; *pres pl* **busken** set or apply themselves G 509, **~ up** get up G 1128*, **buskes** make their way G 1448; *imp* **busk** put up (resistance) G 2248, proceed G 2284, dispose, put C 351, **~ thee** obtain for yourself C 333; *pa and pa ppl* **busked** prepared, arranged Pa 437, G 1693, dressed C 142, **~ to bed** went to bed C 834; **buskes/busked bylive** takes/took (his) way promptly G 1136, 1411; **busked to sete** set in his seat C 1395
- busmare** *n* scorn C 653
- bustwys** *adj* rough, harsh Pe 814; coarse, unpolished Pe 911
- busy** (1) *n* bustle, stir Pa 157
- busy** (2) *v* bestir or exert oneself G 1066; *pres* **busyes thee aboute** you anxiously preoccupy yourself with Pe 268; *pa* **busied** agitated, set into motion G 89
- busyly** *adv* earnestly G 1824
- busynes** *n* solicitude, diligence G 1840, 1986
- by** *prep* by Pe 140+; beside Pe 141+; close to Pe 1148, Pa 248, G 740, 1574, 1697; among Pa 254; in G 1698; along Pe 152, C 1424 G 1650, along the length of G 2224; in line with G 2310; at the hands of C 1426; across, over C 1474; *adv* by C 985; **~ that** thereupon G

- 2152, by that time C 1211, 1687, G 597, 1869; *conj* ~ (that) (~ **that that** G 1137) by the time that C 397, 967, *Pa* 468, G 443, 928, 1169, 1321, 1365, 1412, once, when C 397, G 1106, 1678, 1912, 2032, 2043
- bycalle** *v* call on, conjure *Pe* 913; *pa ppl* **bycalt** ?called, summoned *Pe* 1163*
- bydene** *adv* completely, quite *Pe* 196
- bye** (1) *n* circlet: ring *Pe* 466, necklet C 1638
- bye** (2) *v* buy, purchase *Pe* 478, G 79; *pa and pa ppl* **boght** purchased *Pe* 733, C 67, redeemed *Pe* 651, 893; **bye/boght him** buy/bought for himself *Pe* 732, C 63
- byggyn** *n* building, estate, residence *Pe* 932, C 378, 811; *pl* **byggynge** houses, structures *Pe* 935
- bygly** *adj* ideal to inhabit, splendid *Pe* 963*
- bylde** (1) *n* building, edifice, mansion *Pe* 727, 963
- bylde** (2) *v* construct dwellings G 509; *pa* **bult** built, made (their) homes G 25; *pa ppl* **bulde** built, constructed C 1190, 1392; **bylded** formed (a dwelling place) *Pa* 276
- bylde** (3) *pa pl* strengthened, increased *Pe* 123*
- bylive** *adv* without delay *Pa* 71 +; soon, quickly C 180 +; **as** ~ at once C 1239
- bynde** (1) *n* climbing plant, ivy *Pa* 444*
- bynde** (2) *v* bind G 1211; *pres* **byndes** encloses *Pa* 318; *imp pl* **byndes** bind C 155; *pa and pa ppl* **bounden** bound G 192, fastened *Pe* 1103, G 2486, ~ **to** fastened round *Pa* 374, inset, sewn *Pe* 198, G 573, 600, 609, 2028, **wel** ~ well secured C 322
- bynne** *prep* within C 452, 467
- byrth** *n* birth G 922
- byrth-whates** *n pl* birth-fortunes; **as her** ~ in the order of their births decreed by fortune *Pe* 1041*
- bysulpes** *pres* pollutes, defiles C 575; cf. **sulpen**
- byswykes** *pres* betray, defraud *Pe* 568*
- bythenk thee** *imp* consider, ask yourself C 582
- bytoknyng** *vn* betokening, representation G 626
- bytwyste** *prep* betwixt, between *Pe* 464
- cach(e)** *v* seize, get hold of C 898, 1252, 1514; take G 133; go, take (my) way G 1794; *pres* **caches** takes, takes hold of G 368, 434, 1305; kicks forward (a horse) G 2175; *pres pl* **cachen** drive C 16, **caches** start, begin C 1541, **ye cache** you get G 1938; *pres ppl* **cachande** driving, urging on G 1581; *pa and pa ppl* **cached** seized C 1800, **at ...** ~ adopted from C 1619, ~ **to** went to C 629; see also **caght**
- caggen** *pres pl* fasten, tie up *Pe* 512; *pa ppl* **cagged** bound, tied up C

caght *pa and pa ppl* (of **cach(e)**) (*pa pl* **caght(en)**) came/come by, received *G* 643, 1011, 2508; adopted *C* 1426; seized *C* 1789; taken, captured *C* 1215, 1296, 1612, *G* 1225; fastened, bound *C* 1254; **to me** ~ laid hold of me *Pe* 50; ~ **to** laid hold of *G* 2376; ~ **of** took off *Pe* 237; ~ **away** carried off *C* 1275; ~ **up** lifted up *G* 1185; ~ **fro me** taken from me *Pa* 485; **caghten her leve** took their leave *G* 1118

cal *n* call, summons *C* 61

calde, calden see **calle**

calle *v* (*pres* **calles**, *pl* **calle(n)**, **calles**; *pa* **calde, called**, *pl* **called, calde(n)**; *pa ppl* **called**) call(s), called *Pe* 173 +; named *C* 258, term(s), termed *C* 8 +; declared to be *C* 1119; addresses by (name) *G* 937; cry *G* 1421, 2212; cries out *C* 1345, *Pa* 411, 481; invited *C* 162; summon(s), summoned *C* 948, *imp* 1562, *G* 1376, 1666; proclaim *C* 1564 (*imp*); call out for, implore *C* 1522; **upon calles** calls to *C* 1427; **calles/called on** cries/cried out to *C* 1097, *G* 1743; **of ... (on) ... calles** request(s), call(s) on to grant *G* 975, 1882

callyng *vn* summons *C* 1362

calsydoyne *n* chalcedony *Pe* 1003; *pl* **calsydoynes** *C* 1471

cambe *n* comb worn as headdress; **a comly anunder** ~ a fair one beneath comb (= woman) *Pe* 775*; cf. **cemmed**

candelstik *n* stand for lamps *C* 1275*, 1478, 1532

capados *n* garment covering head, neck and shoulders *G* 186*, 572

caple *n* horse *G* 2175; *pl* **capeles** *C* 1254

captyvide *n* taking of captives *C* 1612

caraldes *n pl* casks *Pa* 159

carande *pres ppl* ~ **for** anxious or worried about *G* 674, 750; *pa* **cared for** was concerned about *G* 1773

carayne *n* carrion *C* 459

care *n* care, sorrow, distress *Pe* 50 +; anxiety *G* 2379; hardship *Pa* 264, *G* 1518, 2384, 2495; *pl* **cares** cares, sorrows *Pe* 808, *Pa* 305, *G* 1255

careful *adj* full of care *Pa* 314; unhappy, sorrowful *C* 770

carf see **kerve**

carfully *adv* with pain or distress *C* 1679, horribly *C* 1252

carle *n* peasant *C* 208; (*as term of abuse*) *C* 876

carneles *n pl* crenellations, battlements *C* 1382, *G* 801

caroles *n pl* ring dances performed to sung words *G* 43, 473*, 1026, 1655, 1886

carp *n* word, utterance *Pa* 415, talk *G* 704, 1013; discourse *C* 23; words (of a song, speech, etc) *Pe* 883, *Pa* 118; teachings *C* 1327, *Pa* 519

carp(e) *v* say, talk, speak *Pe* 381, 949, *G* 360, 1221, 1225; *pres* **carpes**

- C 74, G 1979; **herde carpe** heard tell G 263; **carpe with** speak to G 696; **carpes/carped to** addresses, addressed C 1591, G 377, 1088; **of carped** discussed *Pe* 752
- carpyng** *vn* speech, utterance C 1550
- case** *n* matter *Pe* 673; affair, business G 546; deed, action G 1196; event *Pa* 265; chance G 907; (verbal) point, proposition G 1262
- cast** (1) *n* purpose, plan *Pe* 1163; situation, plight G 2298; stratagem G 2413, devised means C 1070, fastening G 2376*; **~ of his iye** direction of his gaze C 768; *pl* **castes** utterances, words G 1295
- cast(e)** (2) *v* (*pres* **castes**; *pa* and *pa ppl* **cast(e)**, **kest**, *pa pl* **cast(en)**, **kesten**) cast(s) *Pe* 1122+; cast out *Pe* 1198; cast off, cast aside C 1515, cast away *Pe* 861; cast overboard *Pa* 154, 157, jettisoned *Pa* 415; lunge G 1901; threw down G 2001; set, put, placed *Pe* 66, C 1744, G 878, 1649, 2317; created G 2242, made G 2275; drew, set G 2317; uttered C 1712, G 2275, speak G 249*; cast about in one's mind, work out how (to) C 1455; took thought, deliberated G 1855; **~ up** lifted up G 1192, heaped up C 951; (**up**) **~ (of sound)** raised C 1574, G 64; **out ~** cast out C 1679, **~ ... of** cast out of G 1484; **~ upon** washed up on C 460; **of kest** took off G 1147
- castel** *n* castle G 767, 801, 1366, 2067; **in ~ walle** enclosed by a castle wall *Pe* 917; *pl* **casteles** castles C 1458
- catel** *n* property, goods C 1296
- cavelacioun** *n* cavilling, quibbling G 2275
- cavelouns** *n pl* arguments, objections G 683*
- caytif(fe)** *adj* wretched, wicked C 1426; evil C 1605
- cemmed** *pa ppl* combed G 188; cf. **cambe**
- chace** (1) *n* hunt G 1604
- chace** (2) *v* chase, drive out *Pe* 443, hunt G 1416
- chaffer** *n* goods, merchandise G 1647, 1939
- chamber** *n* private or smaller room (as opposed to the public **halle**) of a castle C 1586, G 48, 833, 850, 978, 1030, 1402, 1666, 1989, 2010; bridal chamber and/or the department of a lord's household which deals with his personal and confidential affairs *Pe* 904*; **~ dor** G 1742; *pl* **chambres** G 48
- chamberlayn** *n* servant to assist with dressing, etc, in the bedroom G 1310, 2011*
- chapel(le)** *n* chapel G 63, 712, 1857, 1876, 2107, 2132, 2147, 2169, 2195, 2496; *pl* **chapeles** G 930; **the Grene Chapel** G 451, 454, 705, 1058, 1070, 1674, 1753, 1967, 2186, 3299, **Chapel Grene** 2103
- chaplayn** *n* chaplain G 2107; *pl* **chaplaynes** G 930
- charde** see **charre**
- charge** (1) *n* importance, significance; **of ... no ~** no matter for G 1940
- charge** (2) *v* put on, wear G 863*; impose a task on G 451; *pa*

charged instructed, commanded C 464; *pa* **ppl charged(e)** burdened C 1258; heavy C 1154; loaded C 1295, **charged with the lyght** carrying its load of illumination C 1272

chargeaunt *part adj* burdensome, exacting G 1604

chariotes *n pl* chariots (used in ancient warfare) C 1295

charre *v* turn, come G 1678; *pres* **charres** turns, leads G 1030*; *pa* **charde** changed direction *Pe* 608; **charred** led aside G 850*, turned the course of, redirected G 1143

charres *n pl* tasks, business G 1674

charyte *n* charity *Pe* 470, G 2055

chaste *v* correct, reform C 860

chastysed *pa* punished C 543; (*of animals*) trained, corrected G 1143

chaufen *v* warm C 128; cf. **achaufed**

chaunce *n* chance C 1125, 1129, G 1406, 2103, lot C 1154; event, occurrence C 1588, G 2132; chivalric adventure G 1081, 1838, 2399, 2496; **good** ~ good fortune G 2068, 2103

chauncely *adv* by chance G 778

chaundeler *n* chandelier, lampstand C 1272

chaunge *v* change G 711, 863, exchange G 1406, 1678, *imp* 1107; *pres* *ppl* **chaungande** alarming C 1588; *pa* and *pa* *ppl* **chaunged** transformed C 1258; shifted G 2169; became disturbed C 713, showed distress *Pa* 368*

chaunsel *n* chancel G 946

chawles *n pl* jaws *Pa* 268

chayer(e) *n* chair, seat G 875; throne *Pe* 885, C 1218, *Pa* 378

chef *n* leader C 1238; *adj* chief, principal G 1512, 1604; great, preeminent C 1272; greatest C 684; ~ **halle** great hall, banqueting room C 1588; ~ **quene** official queen C 1586; ~ **gate** main path, direct way G 778

chefly *adv* first of all, as a priority G 1876, in particular G 850, 883, 978; quickly G 1940

cheftayn *n* chieftain, lord, ruler *Pe* 605, C 464, 1295

chek (1) *n* booty, gain G 1107*; *pl* **chekkes** contests, assaults C 1238

chek (2) *n* doom G 1857; evil, disaster G 2195

cheke *n* cheek G 1204; *pl* **chekes** cheeks *Pa* 54, G 953; cheekbones C 1694

chepe *n* cost, price G 1940; *pl* **good chepes** a good bargain, a low price G 1939

chepen *v* go into the market to buy G 1271*

chere *n* demeanour, behaviour *Pe* 407, G 2496; **bele** ~ gracious manners G 1034*; state of mind G 883*; expression *Pe* 887, 1109, C 139, G 334; face, complexion C 1539; countenance *Pa* 368; direction of gaze G 711*, 2169; friendly behaviour C 128, **with** ~ with good will in face and bearing G 1745, **with a wale** ~ showing

- much good will G 1759, **made ... good** ~ gave a warm welcome G 1259*, **made good** ~ looked cheerful, behaved cheerfully C 641, G 562
- cherisch** *v* (*pres pl cherysen*, *pa cherished*) hold dear, value C 1154; show favour to C 128, G 946*, take/took under one's patronage, extend(ed) favour and/or patronage to C 543, 1644, G 2055*
- chese** see **chose**
- chevalrous** *adj* active in knightly combat G 2399
- chevalry** *n* body of knights, cavalry C 1238; state or practice of knighthood G 1512
- cheve** *v* (*pres cheves*; *pa cheved*, *pa ppl cheved(e)*) achieved G 1390, acquire G 1271; **cheve(d) to** get to, reach(ed) G 63, 1674; **he cheves that chaunce** it befalls him G 2103, *subj if hit cheve the chaunce* if it should come about that C 1125
- chevisaunce** *n* acquisition, gains G 1390, 1406, 1678; purchase G 1939
- childe** *n* child G 647; *pl childer* children *Pe* 714, 718, *Pa* 388, 391; adolescents G 280; sons C 1300; *gen pl childeryn* of children C 684
- child-gered** *part adj* with a child's ways G 86*
- chorle** *n* one not of gentle birth G 2107; *pl chorles* bondmen, menials C 1258; (*as a term of abuse*) 'peasants' C 1583
- chose** *v* (*pres choses*) choose(s) G 863, 1271, 1310, 1512; choose a path, make one's way G 2132*, *imp* G 451, **choses he the waye** makes his way G 1876; *pa chos*, **chese** chose *Pe* 759, 954; discerned, perceived *Pe* 187, G 798; made (her) way G 946; *pa pl chosen the gate* made their way G 930; *pa ppl chosen* (C 684), **ichose** (*Pe* 904) selected; **chosen** chosen G 1275, entered upon G 1838, ~ **to** made his way to G 778
- chyde** *v* speak out in anger *Pe* 403, C 1586
- chymne** *n* fireplace G 875, 978*, 1030, 1402, 1667; *pl chymnees* chimney stacks G 798
- chyn** *n* chin G 958, 1204; *pl chynnes* C 789
- chysly** *adv* choicely, especially C 543
- chyst** *n* (*variant of kyste*) chest C 464*
- clad** see **clethe**
- clambe** see **clym**
- clamberande** *pres ppl* clustering, crowded together G 1722; *pa ppl clambred* clustered, crowded G 801*
- clanly(che)** *adv* elegantly, properly *Pe* 2; in proper form, decorously C 1621*; with cleanliness, without impurity C 1089; fully G 393, without impurity or omission C 264, perfectly C 310, unreservedly C 1327; cf. **clene**
- clannes(se)** *n* cleanness, purity C 1, 12, 26, 1087, 1809, *Pa* 32; chastity G 653

claryoun *n* a thin-tubed trumpet with clear, shrill notes (often used on the battlefield) *attributive* C 1210

clater *v* crash down C 912; *pres pl* **clater** clatter, bang C 839; *pres ppl* **claterande** clattering G 731; *pa* **clatered** clattered G 2201; resounded C 972*; *pa ppl* **clatered** fallen noisily, crashed down G 1722

clatering *vn* (the sound of) clattering, clanging C 1515

clawres *n pl* claws, talons C 1696

clay *n* soil C 1034, 1547; plastered wall C 1618; caulking material C 312, 346, **clay-daubed** caulked C 492

clayme *v* claim G 1490; *pa* **claymed** cried out for, clamoured for C 1097

cleches *pres ~ to* grabs C 1348, snatches up C 634; *pres pl* **cleche** obtain C 12; *pa and pa ppl* **cleght** clasped, locked, fastened C 858, 1655

clef see **cleve**

clem *v* assume responsibility for *Pe* 826

clene (1) *adj* clean C 165 +, flawless, pure *Pe* 227 +, 289; clear C 792, 1119; morally blameless G 1013, clean of sin *Pe* 682 +; ceremonially clean by Judaic rules C 334, 508; exact C 1731*; fashioned with elegant exactness C 1057, 1288, 1458, G 158, 163, consummately comely or graceful G 154; elegantly accoutred C 119*

clene (2) *adv* purely, flawlessly *Pe* 754, 767, G 576; clearly, plainly *Pe* 949, C 1606; completely G 1298, 2391; neatly C 175, G 792, with elegant exactness, perfectly C 165, 1382, 1455, G 146; so as to be clean G 2017, (of sin) G 2391, 2393; *comp* **clener** purer, more chaste C 1072*; more perfectly C 1100; cf. **clanly**

clenges *pres* shrinks G 505*; lies on the ground C 1034, G 2078, *pa* **clenged** G 1694; *pl subj* **clynge** shrivel, waste away *Pe* 857

clente *pa ppl* (of 'clench') locked, enclosed *Pe* 259

clepes *pres* calls G 1310; *~ after* cries out for, begs C 1345*; *pa and pa ppl* **cleped** called *Pa* 132, 305

cler(e) (1) *adj* clear *Pe* 1011, G 727, 1747 *and/or* pure *Pe* 207 +, bright *Pe* 2 +; radiant, beautiful C 1400, G 942, 1181, 2351; beautiful G 1831, 2026 *and/or* plain C 26; (of sound) loud, distinct C 1210; whole *Pa* 395; as *n* clearness *Pe* 1050; beautiful one, fair lady G 1489; **all our ~ strenthe** all our full strength *Pa* 395; *comp* **clerer** clearer C 1128; plainer C 1056

cler(e) (2) *adv* absolutely, without qualification *Pe* 274; clearly *Pe* 882, C 1618, *Pa* 357, unobscured G 1696; plainly *Pe* 913

clerest *super adj and adv* most clear(ly), most bright(ly) C 1532

clergy *n* learning, erudition C 1570*, G 2447

clerk *n* learned man, scholar G 2450; *pl* **clerkes** clerics C 1266, G 64,

scholars C 193, 1562, 1575, 1579, 1583, 1631; learned men *Pe* 1091

clernes *n* lustre, beauty C 1353

clethe *v* clothe, apparel C 1741; *pa and pa ppl clad* clothed G 2015, covered *Pe* 22, G 885

cleve *v* split G 2201; *pa clef* split, clove C 367; *pa pl cleven* cleaved, were split *Pe* 66*, **cloven** split apart C 965

clighed *pa* clasped, held close C 1692

clomben see **clym**

clos (1) *n* enclosure, enclosed area C 1088, walled building C 839

clos (2) *adv* closely, tightly, securely C 858, 1655

clos (3) see **close**

close *v* enclose *Pe* 271, set *Pe* 2; close together C 1541; *pres closes* closes G 1742; encloses G 186; *pa and pa ppl closed* closed *Pe* 803; enclosed C 310, 346, 449, G 1298; not open G 572; **closed fro** free from G 1013; **clos** secret, intimate C 512; closed, enclosed *Pe* 512*, C 12, 1070, G 578, shut *Pe* 183, fastened C 1569

closet *n* enclosure (for private pew) G 934, 942

clot *n* clod, earth *Pe* 22, 320; (stretch of) soil *Pe* 789*; *pl clottes* clods of earth *Pe* 857

cloth(e) *n* cloth C 1637, 1742, 2036, (for table) G 125, 885 (or food) C 634; **grete** ~ main sail *Pa* 105; *pl clothes* cloths C 1440, G 876, 1649; clothes C 1400, *Pa* 341, 526, G 2015; bed-clothing C 1788, G 1184

cloutes *n pl* shreds, fragments C 367, 965

cloven see **cleve**

cloyster, cloystor *n* enclosure, precinct *Pe* 969, G 804

cluchches *pres pl* become bent, clench C 1541

clustered *pa* clustered together C 951, *part adj* heaped up C 367

clusteres *n pl* clusters G 1739

cluffy *n* hill, bank, high ground *Pe* 159, C 405, 460, 965, G 713, 1431, 2201; *pl clyffes* (a range of) steep hills, steep banks *Pe* 66, 74, G 1166, 1722, 2078

clym *v* climb, ascend *Pe* 678, 1072; *pa clambe* climbed C 405, **over** ... ~ rose above *Pe* 773; *pa pl clomben* climbed G 2078

clynge see **clenges**

clyppe *v* fasten C 418

clypper *n* shearer *Pe* 802

clyven *v* cleave; **upon** ... ~ inhere in, belong to *Pe* 1196*; *pres clyves* sticks, is fixed C 1630

clyvy *n* clinging plant, goose-grass, burdock C 1692*

cnokes see **knokkes**

cof *adj* brisk, prompt C 624; *adv cof(ly)* promptly, at once C 60, 898, 1428, G 2011

cofer *n* coffer, chest (= ark) *C* 310, 339, 492; receptacle for valuables *Pe* 259*, *pl* **coferes** *C* 1428, *Pa* 159

coge *n* cog, type of ship *Pa* 152

cokres *n pl* leg-coverings *C* 40*

colde *adj and n* cold *Pa* 152 + (*comp* **colder** *Pe* 320); unhappy *G* 1982; ineffectual *C* 1231; bleak, bitter *Pa* 264; *adv* cheerlessly *Pa* 382; **care(s)** ~ bitter care *Pe* 50, 808; as *n* cold ground *G* 2474, **the** ~ coldness *G* 747, 2001, 2078

cole (1) *n* coal *C* 456

cole (2) *adv* coolingly *Pa* 452, 454

colen *v* assuage *G* 1255

coler *n* torque, necklet *C* 1569, 1744

colored *pa ppl* **was** ~ **as** had the colour of *C* 456

comaundement *n* command *G* 1303, 1501

comaundes *pres* commands, orders *C* 1428, *G* 850; *imp pl* **comaundes me** give my compliments to *G* 2417; *pa* **comaunded** commanded *C* 624, 898, *G* 366, 992, gave orders (for) *C* 1741, *G* 1372

combraunce *n* difficulty, adversity *C* 4

combres *pres* destroys, perverts *C* 1024; *pa ppl* **combred** ruined, overwhelmed with disaster *C* 901; destined for destruction *C* 920

come (1) *n* coming, arrival *Pe* 1117, *C* 467, 1706

come (2) *v* (*pres* **comes**, *pl* **com**; *imp* **com** *Pe* 763, *G* 456, *pl* **comes** *C* 60, 801; *pa* **com(e)** *Pe* 155 +, *pl* **com** *Pe* 574, *C* 85, 1316, 1326, **come(n)** *C* 946, 1093, 1574, 1680, *G* 824) come(s), came *Pe* 676 +, **com of** came from *C* 1088; *subj* **come** *G* 1004*, **com** were to come *Pe* 598, 723, *C* 36; *pa ppl* **comen** come, arrived *G* 60, 62, 533, 907, 1369, 1912, 2491

comended see **commende**

comfort (1) *n* (source of) encouragement, trust, consolation; comfort, solace *Pe* 55, 357, 369 (**coumforde**), *C* 512, *Pa* 18, 264, 485, relief *C* 492, *Pa* 223; gratification, pleasure *C* 459, 1809, *G* 1011; **kever** ... ~ obtain pleasure or ease *Pa* 223, 485, *G* 1221, 1254

comfort (2) *v* solace, cheer *G* 1099; *pres* **comfortes** comforts, consoles *G* 2513

comly (1), **comlych(e)** *adj* comely, elegant, beautiful *Pe* 259 +; agreeable, gratifying *C* 512; pretty, nice *G* 1886; nice, proper *C* 334, 508; as *n* **that comly(che)** that goodly person *G* 674, 1755; **a comly** a fair one *Pe* 775*; *comp* **comloker** more comely, fairer *G* 869; *super* **comlokest** most comely, finest *G* 53, 81, 767, 1520

comly (2), **comlyche**, **comlyly** *adv* with becoming propriety *G* 974, 1118, 1307; in a comely fashion *G* 648, in a graceful manner *G* 1505; fittingly *G* 360; in a manner apt to the occasion *G* 1629; kindly, nicely *G* 1389, 1794; properly, nicely *C* 312

commende *v* praise *C* 1; *pa* **comended** praised *G* 1629

commune *adj* ~ **to** given in common to *Pe* 739

comparisunes *pres* likens *C* 161

compas *n* circular course *Pe* 1072*; circumference, bounded area *C* 319; course *C* 1057; form, figure *G* 944

compas *v* devise, plan *C* 1455; *pa* **compast** revolved mentally, considered *G* 1196, ~ **hem** devised for them *C* 697

compayny *n* concourse *Pe* 851; society *G* 1483, social gathering *C* 119; being together *G* 1011, companionship, companionable presence *G* 1099; companions *G* 556, 1912; **in** ~ **gret** in large numbers *Pe* 851

comynes *n pl* subjects of a common ruler, population *C* 1746

con (1) *v* know *C* 1056; can *Pe* 665&, *G* 2138&, know how to, be able to *Pe* 709; *pres pl* **con(ne)** *Pe* 381, 521, *Pa* 27, 513; **connes** are capable of *G* 1267*; know how to *G* 1483; *pa*: see **couthie**

con (2) *auxiliary v* (2*s* **cones**) did *Pe* 78&, *C* (b-verse) 301, 363, 1362, 1561, (a-verse) 344, 768, *Pa* 10b*, 138a, 445b, *G* 2212b, 2295a, (*in bob*) 230&; does, do *Pe* 482&; **con to** began to *Pe* 1181, *C* 945a*

conable *adj* accomplished, able *G* 2450

conscience *n* consciousness, mind *G* 1196; conscience: **with** ~ **sure** with a clear conscience, without fear of lying *Pe* 1089

confourme *imp* ~ **thee to** make yourself like *C* 1067

conne(s) see **con** (1)

connynges *n pl* arts, skills *C* 1611, 1625

conquere *v* overcome the difficulties of *C* 1632; *pa* **conquerd** acquired by fighting, won *C* 1431*

conquerour *n* winner, victor *C* 1322

conquest *pa ppl* (of 'conqueste') won through battle *C* 1305

conquestes *n pl* conquests, victories *G* 311

consayve *v* conceive *C* 649

constrayne *v* compel *G* 1496; cf. **strayn**

contrayes see **countrie**

controeved *pa* devised, introduced *C* 266

contrary *n* opposite, antithesis *C* 4; **in** ~ **of** opposite *C* 1532; *adj* conflicting, opposing *C* 266

contryssyoun *n* contrition, repentance *Pe* 669

conveye(n) *v* (*pa* **conveyed**) escort(ed) (a guest or inmate) on his way *C* 678*, *G* 596, **conveyen ... with cast of his ye** follow with his eyes *C* 768*

conysaunce *n* heraldic cognizance *G* 2026

coprounes *n pl* tops, surmounting tops of architectural features or artefacts *C* 1461, *G* 797

corage *n* heart, spirit *C* 1806

corbel *n* raven *C* 456; *gen* **corbeles** *G* 1355

cordes *n pl* cords, ropes *Pa* 153

corounde *pa and pa ppl* crowned *Pe* 415, 480, 767, 1101

coroune see **crowne**

corse *n* body *C* 1072; dead body *Pe* 320; *after poss* **my** ~ me *G* 1237*,
his ~ him *C* 683; *pl* **corse**s dead bodies *Pe* 857

corsed *pa and pa ppl* cursed *C* 1033, 1583, 1800; accursed *G* 2374;
super part adj **corsedest** most accursed *G* 2196

corsour *n* knight's horse, steed *G* 1583

cortays(e) (**cortes** *Pe* 754) *adj* possessed of or characterized by the
graciousness and excellence proper to a court *Pe* 433, 754, *G* 469,
539, 1511, 1525; courtly, aware of etiquette *G* 276; refined,
fastidious *C* 1089; mannerly *G* 1013, gracious *C* 512; as *n* **that** ~
that gracious one *C* 1097, that courtly lady *G* 2411; cf. **courtaysye**

cortaysly *adv* in a manner befitting a civilized court: with grace,
decorum and propriety *Pe* 381; courteously, graciously *C* 564, *G*
903; in fine or royal manner *C* 1435

cortes see **cortays(e)**

cortyn *n* bed-curtaining *C* 1789, *G* 1185, 1192, 1475; *pl* **cortynes**
bed-curtains *G* 854, 1732

cortyned *pa ppl* ~ **about**e enclosed by curtains *G* 1181

coruppte *adj* infected, contaminated *C* 281

corven see **kerve**

cosse *n* kiss *G* 1300; *pl* **cosse**s *G* 1946, 2351, 2360; cf. **kysse**

cost (1) *n* region, land, area *C* 85, 478, 912, 1322; *pl* **costes** areas *C*
460; shores *C* 1033

cost (2) *n* nature, quality, condition *G* 546*; *pl* **costes** qualities,
properties *C* 1024, *G* 1272, 1849; (modes of) behaviour *G* 944,
1483, 2360; observances *G* 750; **costes of care** hardships *G* 2495*

costoum *n* custom *C* 851

cote *n* tunic, kirtle *G* 152, 335; surcoat, coat of arms *G* 637, 2026;
animal's coat *G* 1921

cote-armure *n* arms shown on a surcoat worn over armour, coat of
arms *G* 586*

coumforde see **comfort** (1)

coundue *v* escort a guest on his way hence *G* 1972*

counsayle, **counsel** *n* counsel, advice *C* 1056, (to a sovereign) *C*
1201, 1619, *G* 347*, 682; guidance, instruction, help *C* 1605; course
of action *Pe* 319, means of achieving, or route to, an end *Pa* 223;
idea, plan *C* 1426; private concerns and feelings *C* 683

counseyl *v* give counsel to, show solidarity with *G* 557

countenaunce *n* mode of behaving, custom *G* 100; mien, demeanour,
bearing *G* 335; appearance *C* 792; show of favour *G* 1490, 1539;
meaningful look *G* 1659

counterfete *v* replicate, be the same as *Pe* 556*; *pres pl* **counterfete**
make a false show of *C* 13

countes *pres* ~ **him** accounts himself C 1685; *pa* **counted** counted C 1731

countr *n* land, nation *Pe* 297, C 1362, 1612, *Pa* 415; region C 281, 1679; country (as opposed to city): **by** ~ on an overland journey G 734; *pl* **contrayes** regions, districts G 713

couple *n* pair C 333; *pl* **couples** leashes holding hounds in pairs G 1147

coupled *pa* leashed (dogs) G 1139

courtaysye *n* moral and/or social grace and excellence, graciousness *Pe* 432*, 444&, C 13, *Pa* 417, G 263, 653, 775*, 1298, 1300, 1773; courtly manners G 1491; propriety, decorum G 247; cf. **cortays(e)**

cout *v* cut C 1104

couthe (1) *adj* known, acknowledged, recognized, familiar C 1054; shown G 1490

couth(e) (2) *pa* (of **con** (1)) (2s **couthes**) could *Pe* 95 +, would be able to; knew *Pe* 484, knew about C 1576; was able to C 813, 1555, G 1937, was capable of C 1287, G 1486, knew how to C 1578, G 1125, 1139, 1937; did C 381, G 2273*

couthly *adv* in a friendly manner G 937*

covacles *n pl* covers for vessels, lids C 1461, 1515

covenaunt *n* agreement, contract *Pe* 563, C 564, G 393, 1384, 2328, 2340; **thy** ~ what was covenanted to you *Pe* 562; *pl* **covenauntes** covenants G 1642, terms of a covenant G 1123, 1408, 2242

covertor *n* coverlet for a bed G 1181; cloth covering for a horse, caparison G 602; *pl* **covertores** coverings for bed G 855*

covetyse *n* covetousness C 181, G 2374, 2380, 2508

coveytes 2s *pres* desire C 1054

cowarde *adj* recreant, cowardly G 2131

cowardely *adv* shamefully, despicably C 1631

cowardyse *n* cowardice G 2273, 2374, 2379, 2508

cow-house *n* cowshed C 629

coyntly, coyntlyche *adv* neatly G 578, 2413, elegantly, gracefully G 934; cf. **quoynt**

crabbed(e) *adj* ill-natured G 502*, cankered G 2435

craft *n* skill, art C 697, 1100, 1452, G 1380; professional expertise C 13; type of activity in which time is employed G 471*; practice, usage C 865; device, phenomenon *Pa* 131*; *pl* **craftes** habits, behaviour C 549; powers, skills *Pe* 356, 890, G 1527, 2447; (skilled) pursuits G 1688*

crafty *adj* artfully designed or constructed G 572*

craftyly *adv* with the skill of a craftsman G 797

cragge *n* crag G 1430, 2183; *pl* **cragges** C 449

crak *n* bursting or splitting sound; blast (of a trumpet) C 1210; *pl* **crakkes** C 1403

crakkande *pres ppl* shattering *G* 1166
crakkyng *vn* bursting, blasts *G* 116
crathayn *n* wretch, caitiff *G* 1773
crave *v* ask, request *Pe* 663, *C* 801, *G* 277, 283, 812, *pa and pa ppl*
craved 1300, 1670; claim *G* 1384
Crede *n* Creed *Pe* 485, *G* 643, 758
crepe *v* go stealthily, steal *C* 917; *pa* **creped** crept *G* 1192
crest *n* crest, headdress *Pe* 856; summit *G* 731
crevisse *n* cleft *G* 2183
Criste(n)mas, **Cristmasse** *n and adj* Christmas *G* 283, 502, 683, 985, 1655; Christmas festivities, celebration of Christmas *G* 907; **upon Cristmasse** over the Christmas season *G* 37, 471; **Cristenmas even** Christmas Eve *G* 734
croked(e) *pa ppl* crooked, curved *C* 1697; (morally) deflected, brought to deviate *G* 653; devious, dishonest *C* 181
crokes *n pl* hooks, scythes *Pe* 40
cropure *n* cover for the hindquarters or croup of a horse *G* 168, 602
cross *n* (Christ's) cross *G* 643, ~ **Cryst** *G* 762
croukes *pres* croaks *C* 459
crowen see **crue**
crowne, **coroune** *n* crown *Pe* 205, 237, 255, 427, 1100, *G* 364, 2529; band of gold *C* 1275, 1444; crown of the head *G* 419, 616; *pl* **crownes** crowns *Pe* 451
crue *pa* crew *G* 2008; *pa ppl* **crowen** crowed *G* 1412
cruppeles *n pl* cripples *C* 103
crye *v* cry, cry out *Pa* 395; proclaim *C* 1361; *pres* **cries** cries (out) *C* 1508, 1582, *Pa* 377; **cries thereof** announces it by baying *G* 1701; *pres ppl* **crying** crying *G* 1088; *pa and pa ppl* **cried** proclaimed *C* 1751; cried, shouted *C* 153, 770, *Pa* 357, *G* 1445; cried out in sorrow, made lament *C* 393, 1080, *G* 760; cried out for *C* 394; (of trumpet) blew *C* 1210
crisolit *n* chrysolite *Pe* 1009; *pl* **crisolites** *C* 1471
crisopase *n* chrysoprase *Pe* 1013
cubit *n* length of the forearm (about 18in/45cm) *C* 319; *pl* **cubites** *C* 315, 405
cuppe *n* drinking vessel *C* 1520, chalice *C* 1461; *pl* **cuppes** *C* 1458, 1510
cure *n* medical care *Pe* 1091
curious *adj* meticulously careful *C* 1109*; elaborate, intricate *C* 1353, 1452, *G* 855

dale *n* low-lying ground, valley C 384, G 1151, 2005, 2162; *pl* **dales** Pe 121

dalt(en) see **dele**

daly, **dayle** *v* converse G 1253*, talk to someone, commune Pe 313; *pa pl* **daylyeden** conversed G 1114

dalyaunce *n* conversation G 1012*, 1529

dam *n* body of water Pe 324, C 416, Pa 312

dame *n* woman of gentle status, lady (*pl* **dame** G 1316): (*as title*) Lady Pa 31, 32, 33; (*in address*) wife G 470

dampned *pa ppl* condemned, damned Pe 641; consigned to perdition C 989

damysel(le) *n* young lady (of gentle birth and courtly status) Pe 361*, 489*

dar *v* Pe 1089, *subj* **dar** G 287, 300, *pa* **durst(e)** (*pl* **dorsten** C 976) Pe 143, 182, C 342, 976, Pa 144, G 1493, 1575 dare(d); venture(d) C 476, 615, G 1991

dare *v* cower Pe 839, G 2258; *pres pl* **dares** G 315; *pa* **dared** cowered Pa 372*; **dard** ?submitted to, ?did homage to Pe 609*

dasande *pres ppl* paralysing, stunning C 1538; *pa* **dased** cowered motionlessly Pa 372*; *pa ppl* **dased** cowering motionlessly, paralysed with fear Pe 1085*

daschande *pres ppl* impacting forcefully, crashing Pa 312

date *n* termination, limit, end Pe 492, 493, 516, 528, 541; point within a stretch of time C 425, season Pe 504, 505, time Pe 517, period (of the day) Pe 529; extent, bounds Pe 540; *pl* **dates** dates (of birth) Pe 1041

daube *imp s* daub, plaster C 313

daunce *subj* (*of an animal*) move rapidly about, twist the body Pe 345*; *pa* **daunced** danced G 1026

daunger *n* (a) power Pa 110; subordination to power C 342; (b) frustration *and/or* deprivation (caused by lack of access to a loved one) Pe 250; (c) disdainful aloofness C 71; (d) danger C 416*; cf. **luf-daungere**

daunsyng *vn* dancing G 47

dawande *pres ppl* dawning Pa 445; *pa* **dawed** dawned C 1755

dawes *n pl* days Pe 282

day(e) *n* day Pe 486 +, dawn G 1126; era G 2522; *gen* **dayes** day's Pe 554, **this ~ long** all this day Pe 533; *pl* **dawes** Pe 282, **dayes** Pe 416 +, *gen pl* Pa 354, **dayes of this erthe** for as long as the world lasts C 520, **dayes of ende** last days of the world C 1032; **in day** ?at any time G 80*

day-glem *n* daylight *Pe* 1094

dayle see **daly**

daylyght *n* daylight *G* 1137, 1180, 1365

daynte (1) *n* courtesy *G* 1266, 1662, respectful politeness *G* 1250*;
had ~ ... **Of** valued *G* 1889*; *pl* **dayntyes** culinary delicacies, haute cuisine *C* 38, *G* 121, 483, 998, 1401, choice foods *C* 1046

daynte (2) *adj* choice, exquisite, fine *G* 1253

day-rawe *n* dawn *C* 893

debatande *pres ppl* debating *G* 2179; *pa* **debated** contended, disputed *G* 68

debate *n* strife, contention, contentiousness *Pe* 390; battle, fighting *G* 1754, 2041, 2248, **bate** *G* 1461

debonere *adj* gracious *Pe* 162, *C* 733* (**boner**), pleasantly good-mannered *C* 830

debonerte *n* graciousness, benignity, complaisance *Pa* 418, *G* 1273; gentleness, lack of aggression *Pe* 798

declar *v* make clear, explain *C* 1618

declyne *v* (a) decline, fall from prosperity *Pe* 333; (b) turn, take a certain direction: **into acorde thay con** ~ they enter into an agreement *Pe* 509*

decre *n* decree, edict *C* 1745, *Pa* 386

dedayn *n* indignation *C* 74, *Pa* 50

ded(e) (1) *adj* dead *Pe* 31 +; **Dede See** Dead Sea *C* 1020

dede (2) *n* deed, action *Pa* 135, 432, *C* 110, 588, *G* 1089; doings *C* 74; act *Pa* 354, activity *G* 1468; business *G* 1047, procedure *G* 1327; *pl* **dedes** *Pa* 203 +; **of dede** in its operation *Pe* 481; **in dede and thought** in action and intention *Pe* 524; **of body and of dedes** in person and behaviour *C* 1061

defence *n* prohibition *C* 243, 245; defence *G* 1282*

defende *v* **yow** ~ defend yourself *G* 2117; *pa* **defende him** defended himself *G* 1551; *pa ppl* forbidden *G* 1156

defoule *n* pollution *Pa* 290

defowle *v* make dirty *C* 1147; **defowled** *pa ppl* defiled, polluted *C* 1129; desecrated *C* 1798; cf. **foule** etc

deghter see **doghter**

degre *n* rank, social position *C* 92, *G* 1006; *pl* **degres** steps, tiers *Pe* 1022

dekenes *n pl* deacons (clerics below the rank of priest) *C* 1266

Dele *n* (contracted form of **devel**) devil *G* 2188, *gen* **Deles** devil's *G* 2192*

dele *v* (*pres* 2&3s **deles**, *pl* **delen**; *pa* **dalt**, *pl* **dalten**; *pa ppl* **dalt**, **deled**) deal *C* 137, *G* 1968*; deal out *G* 1752, *subj* *Pe* 606; dealt out, distributed *Pa* 193, delivered *C* 1756, *G* 452, 2418; give(s), given *G* 295, 397, 1266, 1805, *imp* *G* 2285; engage(d) in *C* 1065, *G* 2192,

2449; deliver(s), utter(s) C 344, 1641, conversed G 1668, engaged in, spoke G 1114*; ~ **with** practise C 1561, use G 560; **to ~ for penies** to be exchanged for coins C 1118; **dalt with** behaved towards G 1662

delful(le) *adj* doleful, grievous C 400, G 560, 1517; cf. **doel**

delfully *adv* grievously, painfully *Pe* 706

delit *n* delight, bliss *Pe* 642, 1117, 1129, 1152, 1153; desire *Pe* 1128, 1140; **with gret ~** beautifully, in such a way as to be delightful to behold *Pe* 1104; with great joy *Pe* 1105, 1116

deliver *adj* delivered of a child C 1084; unrestrained G 2343*

deliverly *adv* lightly, quickly G 2009

delyver *v* free C 500; get rid of C 286; give over to, assign G 851; *pa* and *pa ppl* **delyvered** freed, rescued *Pe* 652; dispatched G 1414

deme(n) *v* judge (of) *Pe* 312, G 246, 2183; adjudge, decree *Pe* 348, 360; suppose, conclude *Pe* 336; estimate G 1322; speak, speak of *Pe* 1183; *pres 2s* **demes** adjudge, condemn *Pe* 325, assume *Pe* 337, *pl* **demen** judge G 1529, bid G 1082; *imp* **deme** *Pe* 313, *subj* **deme** judge *Pe* 349*; **over this dam him ... deme** give permission for him to pass this water *Pe* 324; *pa* **demed** said G 1089; judged G 240; agreed G 1668; pronounced *Pa* 119; *pa ppl* **demed** judged, assessed C 1118, valued; ordained *Pa* 432, decreed C 110; called C 1020, 1611*; said *Pe* 361; **was demed a decre** a decree was pronounced C 1745, **a decree ~ of** a decree pronounced by *Pa* 386

demerlayk *n* witchcraft, magic C 1561; *pl* **devinores of demerlaykes** experts in the interpretation of supernatural phenomena C 1578

demme *v* grow dim, be darkened *Pe* 223*; *pa* **demmed** grew dark C 384*

dene *v* dean, valley *Pe* 295

Denes *adj* Danish G 2223

departes *pres* parts company G 1983; *pa* **departed** departed C 1677; *pa pl* **departed** separated G 1335; parted company *Pe* 379, disjoined themselves C 1074; *pa ppl* divided, split up C 1738; gone, removed C 396

departyng *vn* parting G 1798

depaynt(ed) *pa ppl* studded, ornamented *Pe* 1102; painted, depicted G 649, displayed G 620; cf. **paynted**

depe (1) *n* (the) deep, (the) sea *Pa* 263, 235; *pl* **depe** deeps, deep waters *Pe* 109, *Pa* 297

depe (2) *adj* deep *Pe* 143+; intense *Pe* 215; extreme, profound C 1425, 1609; extensive G 741; *adv* deep, deeply *Pe* 406, C 158, 852, *Pa* 362, G 787

depres *v* beat down *Pe* 779, overthrow; *pa* **depressed** subjugated G 6; pressed G 1770

depryve *v* depose *Pe* 448*; *as n* act of depriving C 185*; *pa ppl*

- deprived of** stripped of C 1227; deposed, usurped C 1738
- dere** (1) *n pl* deer G 1151, 1157, 1322, 1324
- dere** (2) *adj* (of persons) great C 1771, 1794, G 2465, worthy *Pe* 920, C 814, 1302, high-ranking C 92, 1367, important C 1792, dear *Pe* 368, 795, C 52, G 470, 754; (of things) impressive, splendid *Pe* 72 +, prestigious G 75, costly C 1299, 1743, G 193; (of abstractions) pleasing, welcome *Pe* 97, 400, 880, G 47, 564, 1012, precious *Pe* 758, 1183, 1208, C 698, 1806, valued, valuable *Pe* 492, C 1609, closely affecting, intimate C 683, G 2449, fate-deciding C 214*; (of time, season) special G 92, 1047, critical *Pe* 504*; **to the ~ trauthe** so as to reach the all-important truth C 1604; *as n* worthy one G 678, 928; the great one(s) C 1394, 1399, G 928; **tho ~** those excellent ones *Pe* 778; *vocative* dear one G 1798; **my ~** my dear lady G 1492; *super* **derrest** most valuable C 1118; greatest, best C 1306; of highest status C 115, G 445
- dere** (3) *adv* at a dear price, at great cost *Pe* 733; *super* **derrest** most suited to a special occasion G 484*
- dere** (4) *v* harm: impede, obstruct a course *Pe* 1157; *imp pl* **deres** harm C 862; *pa* **dered** troubled, distressed G 1460
- derely** *adv* nobly, excellently *Pe* 995, C 270; fulsomely, heartily G 1031; ceremoniously G 817, in proper form G 1327, in a fine fashion G 1559, enviably G 1253; very much G 1842
- deres** (1) *n pl* injuries, troubles *Pe* 102
- deres** (2) see **dere** (4)
- derf, derve** *adj* fierce, stern, tough G 564, 1047*; strong G 1233; doughty G 1000*, 1492; mighty *Pa* 166; dreadfully loud C 862
- derfly** *adv* boldly *Pa* 110, G 2334; without fear or hesitation C 1641; promptly C 632
- derk** (1) *n* darkness, the dark *Pe* 629, *Pa* 263; night C 1755, G 1999
- derk(e)** (2) *adj* dark C 1020, G 1177, 1887
- derne** (1) *adj* secret, hidden C 588; undisclosed, privy G 558*, private G 1012*; **~ connynges** esoteric wisdom, abilities in arcane matters C 1611; **in ~** out of sight, hidden away *Pa* 182
- derne**(2), **dern(e)ly** *adv* secretly, privately C 697; surreptitiously G 1183*, 1188
- derrest** see **dere** (1)
- derve** see **derf**
- derworth** *adj* sumptuous, splendid *Pe* 109
- derworthly** *adv* honourably, with especial respect G 114
- dese** *n* focal platform: the high table (at the head of the side tables) at meals C 38, 115, G 222, 250, 478; **(up)on (the) dese** (cf. **highe dese/table**) on the dais, at the head of the feast table C 38, 1394, 1399, 1517, G 61, 75, 114, 445, on to the dais G 1000; on throne *Pe* 766, *Pa* 119*

desert *n* deserts, deserving *Pe* 595, *Pa* 84, *G* 1266, merit *Pa* 12

deserve *pres pl* deserve *G* 1779, *pa ppl* **deserved** 1803; see also **served**

desevered *pa ppl* removed, cut off *Pa* 315

dessyples *n pl* disciples *Pe* 715

destine *n* destiny *C* 400, *G* 99, 1752; doom *G* 2285; **my dere** ~ the dear one to whom I was destined to be joined *Pe* 758; **a ~ due** some due destined lot *Pa* 49; *pl* **destines** things sent by destiny or fate *G* 564

desyres *pres* desires, wants *C* 545, *subj* **desire** *C* 1648; *pres pl* **desyres** wish for *G* 1257

deth(e) *n* death *Pe* 323 +

devel *n* devil (*gen* **develes** *C* 180); as colloquial intensifier **What the ~** *Pa* 196; **as the ~** as/like Hell *C* 1500, *Pa* 274, **the ~ half** not a bit *Pa* 460*

devine *n* deviner and/or prophet *C* 1302; *v* interpret *C* 1561

devinores *n pl* interpreters *C* 1578

devise (1) *n* (a) device *Pe* 139*; (b) artistic device, arrangement *G* 617; (c) mental picture, desire: **at my ~** imaginable by me, that I could desire *Pe* 199

devise (2) *v* (*pres* **devises**; *pa and pa ppl* **devised**) (a) recounted *G* 92; describes, described *Pe* 984, 995, 1021, *C* 110, 1157, 1325, 1756, explains, explained *C* 1604; **for to ~** to give an exact account of *Pe* 99; (b) behold, observe closely *Pe* 1129; **for to ~** to behold; (c) designed, fashioned *C* 1288; contrive, manage *C* 1100; imagine *C* 1046; assigned *C* 238

devisement *n* description, account *Pe* 1019

devocioun *n* religious service, sacred ritual *G* 2192

devout *adj* reverential, devout *Pe* 406; sacred, holy *Pa* 166

devoutly *adv* reverently *C* 814, devoutly *Pa* 333

devoyde *v* remove *Pe* 15; obliterate *C* 908; *imp* **devoyde** dispel *Pa* 284

devoydyng *vn* removing, extirpation *C* 544

dewyne *v* languish, waste away *Pe* 11, 326

dialokes *n pl* ?accounts, ?chronicles *C* 1157*

diamantes *n pl* diamonds *G* 617

dich(e) *n* ditch *C* 1792, *G* 1709, (for drainage) *Pe* 607, (for defence) *G* 786; *pl* **diches** drainage channels, gutters *C* 1251; moat *G* 766

diden see **do** (2)

die(n) *v* die *Pe* 306, 642, *C* 400, 1329, *G* 996; *pres pl* **dyen** *G* 1163; *pa* **dyet** *Pe* 705, **dyed** *Pe* 828

diete *n* food, meal *Pa* 460

dight(e) *v* arrange, dispose, ordain *Pe* 360; prepare *C* 818; **~ me the dome** give a ruling for me *G* 295; *pres* **dightes me to die** put me to death *Pa* 488; *pa* **dight** placed *C* 699; **dight hit** treated it *C* 632; *refl* **him dight** betook himself *G* 994; *pa pl* **dighten ... to deth** put to

death C 1266; *pa ppl* **light** set *Pe* 920, C 1794, G 114; made ready G 1559, 2223; arranged, arrayed C 1688*, 1753, G 1689, adorned *Pe* 202, 987; caused G 678, ordained C 243, G 1884, decreed *Pa* 203, **if me be light** if it is ordained for me *Pa* 49

dille *adj* slow (of wits), foolish G 1529; **to answare he is not ~** he is not at a loss for an answer *Pe* 680

diner *n* first major meal of the day G 928, 1559*

dint *n* blow C 1196, *Pa* 125, G 315, 389, 452, 560, 1286, 2105, 2223, 2264; *pl* **dintes** blows G 202, 336, 1460, 2116

dipped *pa* sank *Pa* 243; *2s* **diptes** *Pa* 308

dische *n* dish (used at table and/or in church) C 1146; *pl* **disches** platters C 1279, G 122; types of food G 128

discover *v* reveal G 1862, *pa* **discovered** C 683; *pres* **discoveres** uncovers, reveals G 418

discrye *v* (**were**) **to ~ /discreven** (were) to be seen *Pe* 68, G 81

dismay *imp ~ you* distress yourself, be upset G 470; *part adj* **dismayd** disconcerted, unnerved G 336

dispayred *part adj* having given up hope, despairing *Pa* 169

dispit(e) *n* offensive treatment C 821; **~ make** behaving resentfully *Pa* 169

displayes *pres* ?spreads out C 1542*; *pa* **displayed** unfolded C 1107; *pa ppl* **displayed** exposed to view G 955

displese *v pres 2&3s* **displeses** offend(s) *Pe* 455, C 1136; *subj* **displese** offend G 1304, displease *Pa* 1, 531; *imp pl* **displese(s) not, displese yow noght/never** do not be offended *Pe* 422, G 1839, 2439; *pa and pa ppl* **displeased at** (was) offended by C 196, 1494

dispoyled *pa ppl* undressed *Pa* 95, G 860*

dispyred *pa ppl* treated with contempt C 1792

disserved *pa and pa ppl* deserved G 452*; **merit ~** deserved any merit C 613

disstrye *v* destroy C 520, 907; *pres* **disstryes** destroys G 2375; **disstryed** *pa pl and pa ppl* destroyed C 1160; dispelled, cured *Pe* 124*; cf. **strye**

distresed *pa* pressed in on C 880

distresse *n* anguish, pain *Pe* 280, C 307*; coercion *Pe* 898; **with ~** forcibly, violently C 1160; cf. **doel-distresse**

dittes *pres* closes, stops up C 588; *pres ppl* **ditande** closing C 320; *pa dit* blocked in C 1182; *pa ppl* **dit** closed firm G 1233

divinite *n* skill in divination, theological wisdom C 1609

do (1) *n* doe, female deer *Pe* 345; *pl* **does** G 1322

do (2) *v* (*pres* **dos**, *pl* **don**; *imp* **do**, *pl* **dos**; *pa* **did**, *pl* **diden**; *pa ppl* **done**) (a) do, does, did, done *Pe* 496 +, over (*pa ppl*) G 928, 1365; put *Pe* 250, 366, 1042, C 320, 1224, G 478; pay, give *Pe* 424, G 1798; **thou dos** you make *Pe* 338; **dos hir** goes G 1308; **do(s) away**

remove(s) *Pe* 823, *C* 286, *imp* **do(s) (a)way** put an end to, stop (such talk) *Pe* 718, *C* 862, *G* 1492; **done doun** brought down *C* 1801; *inflected inf* **to done** to be done *Pe* 914; rendered *Pe* 282; destroyed *C* 989; *imp before imp* *Pa* 204, 386, *G* 1533; (b) cause(s), caused *Pe* 17 +; (c) *to form periphrastic pres*, e.g. **dos mene** means *Pe* 293, 630; *to recapitulate previous verb* *G* 998, 1887, 2285

doel *n* grief, pain, misery *Pe* 51 +; cf. **delful(le)**

doel-distresse *n* misery which brings distress *Pe* 337

doel-dougoun *n* prison of woe *Pe* 1187*

does see **do** (1)

dogge *n* dog *C* 1792; *pl* **dogges** *G* 1600

doghter *n* daughter *G* 2465; *pl* **deghter** daughters *C* 270, 866, 899, 933, 939, 977, 993, **doghteres** *C* 814

doghty *adj* (a) doughty, effective (in combat), valiant, strong *C* 1181, *G* 724, 2264; *super* **doghtyest** *C* 1306; *as n* **that doghty** *G* 2334; (b) of worth, grand *C* 1791*

dole *n* part *Pe* 136, *G* 719; portion bestowed, lot, gift *C* 699

dome *n* sentence *Pe* 580 +; judgement *Pe* 699; ruling *Pe* 667, *G* 295; ability to judge, mental faculties *Pe* 157, 223, *C* 1046; opinion *G* 1216, pronouncements *C* 1325; command *C* 632; *pl* **domes** judgements, sentences *C* 717

domesday *n* Judgement Day *G* 1884

don, done see **do** (2)

dor *n* door *C* 44, 320, 500, 602, 653, *G* 136&, doorway *Pa* 268, gateway *C* 1182; **house** ~ house door *C* 602, **kenel** ~ kennel door *G* 1140

dorsten see **dar**

dos see **do** (2)

dotage *n* madness, folly *C* 1425

dotel *n* fool, clot *C* 1517

dots *pres* is quite befuddled in (his) wits *C* 1500; ~ **for elde** is foolish through old age *Pa* 125; *pres pl* **doten** are morally blind *C* 286; *pa and pa ppl* **doted(e)** deprived of wits, deranged *G* 1151; witless *Pa* 196; was confounded *C* 852; **had doted** had lost their wits *G* 1956

double *adj* double, extra large *Pe* 202*, *G* 786*; *adv* twice *G* 2033; with double portions *G* 61*, 483, **doublefelde** 890

doumbe *adj* dumb *Pa* 516

doun *prep and adv* down *Pe* 30 +; (*of sun*) set *Pe* 538; cf. **adoun**

dougoun *n* underground prison cell *C* 158, 1224

doute *n* fear *G* 246, 442; **withouten** ~ certainly *Pe* 928; cf. **dut**

douteles *adv* indubitably, undoubtedly *G* 725

douth *n* company, group of living beings *Pe* 839, *C* 597, *G* 1365; nation, species *C* 270; army *C* 1196; retinue, following *C* 1367, company in hall *G* 61, 397*, 1415, 1956

douve *n* dove C 469, 481, 485

dowes *impers v* avails; **what ~ me the dedayn** what good does indignation do me *Pa* 50; *pa* **noght dowed** nothing availed C 374, *subj* **dowed** would be worth G 1805

down *n* upland, hill *Pe* 121; *pl* **downes** G 695, 1972, ~ **sides** hillsides *Pe* 73

dowrie *n* property lawfully belonging to a wife or widow C 185*

draght *n* drawbridge G 817; *pl* **draghtes** things drawn or written, characters, symbols C 1557

draw *v* proceed, go C 500, 599; *pres* **drawes** draws G 1031, comes, proceeds C 1329; *pres pl* **drawe** draw to yourself, acquire G 1647; *imp* **draw** bring *Pe* 699; *pa* **drow** drew, pulled G 335, 1188; *pa pl* **drow(en)** drew C 71, G 1463, made their way *Pe* 1116, C 1394; *pa ppl* **drawen** drawn, led *Pe* 1193, (of a door) closed G 1233, ~ **to the erthe** pulled down, razed C 1160

drechch *n* impediment, delay G 1972

drede *n* dread, fear *Pe* 181 +; **withouten** ~ without doubt, certainly *Pe* 1047

drede *v* feel dread G 2211, fear G 2355; *pres* **drede**s dreads *Pa* 125, feels dread *Pa* 241; *pa* **dred** *Pe* 186

credles *adj* fearless G 2334

dreme *n* dream *Pe* 790, 1170, G 1750; *pl* **dremes** C 1578, 1604, *Pa* 188

drepes *pres* destroys C 246, 599; *pa and pa ppl* **dreped** struck down C 1648; slain, destroyed C 1306, G 725

dresse *v* dispose, ordain *Pe* 495; **to ... me ~** turn to G 474; *pres* **dresses** arranges, places (himself) *refl* G 417; turns G 445; rises G 566; *pa* **dressed** arranged G 2033, disposed G 1000; **dressed to** made their way to G 1415; **dressed up** rose up G 2009; *pa ppl* **dressed** placed, set C 1399, 1477, G 75, **drest** *Pe* 860; assigned C 92; provided C 1518*

dreve *v* drive; pass *Pe* 323; *pa* **dreved** pressed forward *Pe* 980

drink(e) *n* drink C 123, 182, G 1684, 1935; cf. **drynke**

drive, dryf *v* direct, deliver (a blow) G 389; **out dryf** drive away *Pe* 778; *pres* **drives** spreads C 1760*; drives (something) about C 433; **drives on lofte** rises C 692; **drives to** (of time) succeeds G 1999*; **drives me over** courses over me *Pa* 312; **drives (for) to** forces (into a certain course or direction) G 523; *pres pl* **driven** come, arrive G 121; (of time) spend, pass G 1468; *pres ppl* **drivande** proceeding G 222; *imp s* **dryf over** fly over C 472, *pl* **drive out** proclaim *Pa* 386; *subj* **drive ... doun** sink *Pe* 1094; *pa ppl* **driven** drawn, brought, conveyed *Pe* 1194; carried along *Pa* 263; suffered G 558; engaged in G 1020; forced, compelled G 1047, chased C 289, G 1159; driven through by nails C 313; **driven adoun** descended G 2263

drof *pa* (of **drive**, **dryf**) drove, went *Pe* 30, raced *G* 1151; plunged *C* 214, *Pa* 235; made, struck *G* 2005; (of time) passed, spent *G* 1176; ~ ... **in** entered, sank into *Pe* 1153; ~ **to** made its way to *C* 1425, adjoined to *G* 786, reached *C* 219; ~ **upon** drove on upon *C* 416

drought(e) *n* dryness, dry weather *C* 524, *G* 523

dronken see **drynk(e)**

dropes *pres* falls in drops, drips *G* 519; *pres ppl* **droppande** falling *Pa* 383; *pa* **dropped** sprinkled *Pa* 375

drow(en) see **draw**

drowne *v* drown *Pa* 245; *pa* **drowned** drowned *C* 372, **drownde** plunged, sunk *Pe* 656; *pa ppl* **drowned** engulfed *C* 989

drury (1) *n* romantic love *C* 699, *G* 1517; love token *G* 1805, 2033; **dele/dalt** ~ have/had love-dealings with *C* 1065*, *G* 2449; *gen* **druryes** love's *G* 1507

drury (2) *adj* 'dreary', grim *Pe* 323

drye (1) *adj* dry *C* 385*, 412, 460; ill from one of the diseases caused by want of bodily moisture *C* 1096*; as *n* dry land *C* 472, *Pa* 338

drye (2) *adj* heavy, grave *Pe* 823, *C* 342, *G* 1750; unremitting *G* 1460; unmoved, unflinching *G* 335*, 724; *adv* unswervingly, straight *G* 2263; **drawes him on** ~ draws aside *G* 1031*, **drow hem adrey** drew back *C* 71; cf. **dryly(ch)**

drye (3) *v* undergo, go through *C* 372, 400, 1032, 1224, *G* 560; hold out, survive *G* 202; bear, tolerate *C* 599; *pa* **dryed** suffered, underwent *Pa* 256; continued unabated *C* 491*

dryed *pa ppl* made drier *C* 496

dryf see **drive**

dryftes *n pl* snowdrifts *G* 2005

Dryhtyn *n* the Lord *Pe* 324 +; *gen* **Dryhtynes** the Lord's *C* 219

dryly(ch) *adv* (from **drye** (2)) with unswerving motion, straight and fast *Pe* 125, *Pa* 235; continuously *C* 476, *G* 1026; completely, utterly *Pe* 223; gravely *C* 74, 344

drynk(e) *v* drink *G* 337; *pa* **drank** *C* 1517, *G* 1791; *pa pl* and *pa ppl* **dronken** drank *G* 1025, 1114, 1668, drunk *C* 1500, *G* 1956; cf. **drink(e)**

dubbed *pa ppl* arrayed, adorned *Pe* 73, 97, *C* 115, 1688*, 1743, *G* 75, 571; bespangled *Pe* 202, *G* 193

dubbement *n* ornamentation, enrichment *Pe* 109, 121; cf. **adubbement**

dubler *n* platter *C* 1146; *pl* **dubleres** *C* 1279

dublet *n* doublet (worn under armour as an extra layer of defence) *G* 571

duches *n gen* duchess's *G* 2465

due *adj* owed *Pe* 894; appointed *Pa* 49

duk *n* magnate *Pe* 211, 1367, *pl* **dukes** *C* 38, 1518; leader *C* 1771,

military commander C 1182, 1235; sovereign ruler over a territory C 1745, G 678*; **Duk of Clarence** G 552*

dumpe *v* plunge *Pa* 362*

dungen see **dynges**

dunne *adj* dark *Pe* 30

dure *v* continue in being, live *Pa* 488; *pres pl* **duren** endure, last C 1021; *pres ppl* **durande** lasting, unremitting *Pe* 336; *pa* **dured** lasted C 1757

durst(e) see **dar**

dushed *pa* ~ **to** fell with a pounding blow upon C 1538

dust *n* dust G 523; ashes *Pa* 375, 383

dut *pa* feared G 222, 784, *subj* **dutte** G 2257; cf. **doute**

dwelle *v* stay, live C 1674; remain G 1082; *pres* **dwelles** resides C 158; remains, stays G 566; *pres pl* **dwelles** live, reside *Pa* 69, 422; *imp pl* **dwelles** stay G 1075; *pa* **dwelled** dwelled C 376, 1770, resided C 1196

dyed, dyen, dyet see **die**

dym(me) *adj* not bright, dull, dark *Pe* 1076; (*of water*) C 472, 1016, *Pa* 308

dymly *adv* feebly, faintly *Pa* 375

dyn *n* noise *Pe* 339, C 862; sound G 47, 1183; rumour C 692, ado G 1308*

dynges *pres* beats G 2105; *pa pl* **dungen** beat, battered, struck C 1266

dyngne *adj* worthy, honourable *Pa* 119, G 1316

dyngnete *n* high rank, noble status C 1801

dysheriete *v* as *n* dispossessing of inheritance C 185*

Ebru *proper n* Hebrew (person) *Pa* 205, (language) C 448

eft *adv* a second time *Pe* 328 +; again *Pa* 316, G 700, 1668, back again *Pa* 143; afterwards C 248, 1073, 1141, 1144, *Pa* 527, G 898, in future G 2388; answeringly, likewise C 562, G 641, 788

eftersones *adv* again, a second time G 1640, **eftsones** likewise G 2417

egge *n* edge, blade C 1104, G 212, 2392; **under bare** ~ (to die) beneath the naked blade C 1246; *pl* **egges** limits, tops C 383; ridges, crests of mountains C 451

eggyng *vn* egging on, incitement C 241

eke *adv* as well, in addition, also G 90, 1741

elde *n* age C 657, G 844; age group, generation G 1520; old age *Pa* 125; cf. **olde**

elles *adj* **no wye** ~ (G 384), **any man** ~ (G 2108) any other man; *n* something else *Pa* 2; *adv* otherwise *Pe* 32, *Pa* 125; in other matters G 1082; else *Pa* 451, G 1550; *conj* provided that C 466, 705, G 295; **or/other** ~ or else *Pe* 130&

em(e) *n* uncle C 924*, G 356, 543

emerald *n* emerald *Pe* 118, 1005; *pl* **emeralds** *C* 1470

emperise *n* empress *Pe* 441

emperour *n* one in authority over subordinate kings, supreme ruler *C* 1323

empire *n* empire *C* 1332, 1349; *empireship* *Pe* 454, *C* 540

enaumayld *pa ppl* enamelled *C* 1411, 1457, *G* 169; cf. **aumayl**

enbaned *pa ppl* parapeted, provided with projecting shelves *C* 1459*,
G 790

enbrawd(e), enbrawd(e)n *pa ppl* decoratively inwoven or institched
G 78, 609, 856, 879, 2028, sewn on/in as an ornament *G* 166

enchace *v* hunt, pursue *Pe* 173

enclose *v* contain, have within oneself *Pe* 909; *imp* enclose *C* 334

enclyin *adj* prone, prostrate *Pe* 1206*

encline *v* slant downwards, decline *Pe* 630; incline the head or body,
bow *G* 340; *pres ppl* **enclynande** inclining, bowing *Pe* 236; *pa ppl*
enclyned inclined, drawn *C* 518

encres *v* ~ **To** increase for *Pe* 959

encroche *v* obtain, draw to oneself *Pa* 18; *pa* **encroched** attracted,
drew to itself *Pe* 1117

ende *n* end, limit *C* 303, 1732, *G* 215&, loose end *G* 657, 660; front *G*
2180; outcome *C* 608; **upon** ~ in the end *C* 1329; **to an** ~ (*G* 63),
on ~ (*Pa* 426) to an end; into an upright position *C* 423; **dayes of**
~ last days of the world *C* 1032; *pl* **endes** tips of dangling parts of a
girdle *G* 2039

ende *v* end, die *C* 402

endeles *adj and adv* without a loose end *G* 629, endless *G* 630;
infinitely *Pe* 738

endent *pa ppl* indented, hooked into; **with derk** ~ encroached upon
by darkness *Pe* 629*; (*of jewels*) set, mounted *Pe* 1012

endentur *n* seam, join *C* 313*

endite *v* consign, condemn *G* 1600*; *pres pl* compose, put into sung or
spoken words *Pe* 1126

endure *v* have the capacity or power to, suffice *Pe* 225*; be of such a
nature as to be adequate to or for, sustain *Pe* 1082; *pa ppl* **endured**
borne *G* 1517; persevered *Pe* 476

ene (1) see **ieye**

ene (2) *adv* once; **at** ~ at one and the same time *Pe* 291, at a single
point of time *Pe* 953

enfamined *pa* became afflicted with famine *C* 1194

enforsed *pa* forced *C* 938

enfoubled *pa ppl* wrapped *G* 959

engendered *pa* engendered, begot *C* 272; cf. **gendered**

Englych *n* the English, Englishmen *G* 629

enherite *v* inherit *C* 240

enker *adj* ~ **grene** vivid green *G* 150*, 2477
enle *adv* singly *Pe* 849
enmy *n* enemy *G* 2406; *pl* **enmies** *C* 1204, *Pa* 82
empoysened *pa* poisoned *C* 242*
enpresses *pres* oppresses, exercises force upon *Pa* 43*, 528
enprysonment *n* imprisonment *C* 46
enquylen *pres pl* acquire, obtain *Pa* 39*; cf. **aquyle**
ensens *n* incense *Pe* 1122
entayled *pa ppl* fashioned, wrought *G* 612
entent *n* state of mind: **in true** ~ in good faith, faithfully *Pe* 1191
enter *v* enter *Pe* 966, *C* 329, *Pa* 328, *imp C* 351; *pres* **entres** *Pe* 1067, *C* 1240, *G* 221, 934; *pa* **entred** *Pe* 38, *C* 842
entre *n* entry, entrance *C* 1779
entyse *v* attract *G* 2436; *pres* **entyses** incite(s), provoke(s) *C* 1137, 1808
enurned *pa ppl* bestudded or inlaid (with jewels) *Pe* 1027, *G* 634*, 2027
erande, ernd(e) *n* business, purpose, mission *Pa* 202, *G* 257, 559, 1051, 1067, 1808, 2303; message *Pa* 72, *G* 811, petition *G* 809; **in his ernde** on his business *Pa* 52
erber(e) *n* garden, harbour *Pe* 9, 38, 1171
erbes *n pl* plants, vegetation *G* 517; grass(es) *C* 532, 1675, 1684, *Pa* 393, 438, *G* 2190
erde *n* earth, world *C* 228, 596; area, land *C* 1006; **in** ~ on earth *C* 601, 892 (**on** ~), *G* 1544, 2416, (*with weakened sense*) indeed, in truth, in fact *G* 27, 140, 881; *pl* **erdes** lands *G* 1808
ere (1) *n* ear *Pe* 1153, *Pa* 64, 429; *pl* **eres** ears *C* 585, 874, 1670, *Pa* 123, **umbe his** ~ around him *C* 874*
ere (2) *adv, prep and conj* before *Pe* 164+, ~ ... **ne** *C* 225; before that time *Pe* 319, 324, 328, 372, *Pa* 212; ~ **then** before then *C* 1088, 1339, *conj* before *Pe* 631, 1094, 1670; ~ **this** before now *G* 1892
erigaut *n* outer garment, surcoat *C* 148
erle *n* earl *Pe* 211
erly *adv* early in the day *Pe* 506, *C* 895, 946, 1001, *G* 567, 1101, 1126, 1474, 1689; ~ **and late** at all times of the day *Pe* 392
ermyn *n* ermine *G* 881
ernde see **erande**
erne-hued *adj* eagle-coloured (= dull grey) *C* 1698; cf. **hernes**
ernestly *adv* vehemently, with violence *C* 1240; vigorously *C* 277
errour *n* error, theological error; **speke** ~ say what is (theologically) erroneous *Pe* 422
erthe *n* world *Pe* 442+; ground *C* 150&, *G* 427&; earth *C* 452, 747, 1027, 1332, *Pa* 363, *G* 818
eschaped *pa* escaped *C* 970, *Pa* 110, slipped away (from) *Pe* 187; cf.

scape and **ascape**

ese *n* ease, comfort *G* 1071, 1096, 1539, 1676, 1798; **with ... made him at ~** started to relax with *C* 124

est *n* and *adj* (the) east *Pa* 133; **on ~** in the east *Pa* 133

etayn *n* giant *G* 140; *pl* **etaynes** *G* 723

ete *v* eat *G* 85, 91; *pa* **ete** ate *C* 241, 1684, *G* 113, 1135

ethe (1) *adj* easy, not difficult *Pe* 1202, *C* 608, *G* 676

ethe (2) *v* conjure *G* 379, call on, urge *G* 2467

evel (1) *n* wrongdoing, sin *C* 573, *G* 1552; *pl* **eveles** evils *C* 277

evel (2) *adj* poor, inferior *C* 747; *adv* ill, badly *Pe* 310, 930

even (1) *n* eve, day before *G* 734, 1669

even (2) *adj* clear of debt, square *G* 1641

even (3) *adv* exactly *Pe* 740, *C* 602, 1654, *G* 1004, 1593; in fact *G* 2464; directly *Pa* 65, *G* 1589; accurately *C* 317; **up ~** right up *G* 444; **to ... ~** *C* 510, ~ **doun to** *G* 1345* right to; **ful ~** directly *Pa* 352

even (4) *v* be equivalent to; emulate *Pe* 1073

evensong *n* Vespers (an early evening service) *Pe* 529*, *G* 932

eventide *n* evening time *Pe* 582, *C* 479, 485, 782, *G* 1641

ever *adv* always *Pa* 14 +; all the time, constantly *Pe* 153 +; everywhere *G* 172; ever, at any time *Pe* 200 +; **for ~** eternally *C* 402, 1802, always *G* 293; ~ **... so** to whatever degree *Pe* 618, *C* 1123; *emphatic* (*G* 1913), *with* **ere** (*Pa* 356, 476, *C* 834) *with* **who/where** (*G* 661*, 682) at all; *as intensifier in questions expecting a negative answer* *C* 717

everferne *n* oak-fern *Pa* 438

evermore *adv* for ever, always *Pe* 591 +

everuchone *pron* each one *C* 1221

eves *n pl* edges, borders *G* 1178*

evesed *pa ppl* (of hair) trimmed, cut *G* 184

eweres *n pl* ewers, vessels for holding water *C* 1457*

excellently *adv* surpassingly *G* 2423

excuse *imp* excuse *C* 70; *pa* **excused hem** excused themselves *C* 62; *pa ppl* **excused** pardoned *G* 2131, 2428

expoun(e) *v* expound, describe *Pe* 37, *G* 209, 1540; explain, construe *C* 1729; *pres* **expounes a speche** delivers some remarks *C* 1058, *pa* **expounded His speche** delivered His words *C* 1492, *pres pl* **much speche ... expoun** discuss much *G* 1506; *pa* **expounded** explained, interpreted *C* 1606

expounyng *vn* expounding *C* 1565

expresse *adj* specific, particular *Pe* 910; *adv* manifestly, explicitly *C* 1158

fader *n* father *C* 1128&; (*used of God*) *Pe* 736, *C* 542&, *Pa* 92, 337, *gen*

faderes *Pe* 872; epitome *G* 919; ancestor *C* 684; **yore** ~ forefather *Pe* 322, **forme** ~ first father *Pe* 639 (Adam)

faght see **fight** (2)

fale *adj* (of vegetation) faded, withered *G* 728*

falewed *pa* lost colour, paled *C* 1539

fall *v* (*pres falles*) fall(s) *C* 462, *Pa* 105, *G* 507, 728, 1067, *subj falle* should fall *G* 2282; be ruined *C* 725; betide *G* 2378, come about *C* 22, 567, *G* 2132, 2528, befalls *Pa* 178, occurs *C* 494, *G* 2251; be/is customary or appropriate *G* 358, 484, 890, 1303, 1358; **falle fro** be descended from *C* 685; **me falles** is due to me *G* 2327, **thee failed** was due to you *G* 2243; *pres pl fallen in* get into *C* 271; **fallen to** converge on *C* 837; **fallen him to** join him *G* 1702; *pa and pa ppl: fel, felle(n), fallen:* see **fel**

false *adj* false *C* 1167, 1341*, 1522; wrongful *Pa* 390; faithless *C* 205, 474, *Pa* 283, dishonest *C* 188, *G* 2382; as *n the* ~ the faithless ones *C* 1168

falssyng *n* false or deceitful dealing *G* 2378

famacions *n pl* imputations, aspersions *C* 188

fande see **fynde**

fannes *pres* moves its wings *C* 457; *pres ppl fannande* projecting fan-like outwards and downwards *G* 181*

fantoum *n* phantom, illusory apparition *G* 240; *pl fantummes* illusions, objects or appearances that deceive the senses *C* 1341

farande *pres ppl* handsome *C* 607, pleasing *Pe* 865, grand *C* 1758, *G* 101

farandely *adv* pleasingly situated *Pa* 435

fare (1) *n* journey, passage *Pa* 98; course or direction taken *G* 409*, 1703; behaviour, actions *Pe* 832, *C* 861, *G* 1116, what happens to one *G* 2386; provision of food, hospitality, entertainment *G* 694; feast, party *G* 537

fare (2) *v* (*pres fares*, *pl fare*; *pa ferde*, *pl ferden*; *pa ppl faren*) fare *C* 466, proceed *Pe* 147, go(es), went *G* 699, 703, 1433, 1973, *imp fare* go *C* 621, 929, *subj fare* pass, travel *C* 100; looked like *G* 149*; behaves, behaved *Pe* 129, *C* 1106, *G* 1282*, ~ ... **to** behave towards *Pe* 467; **about** ~ bestir myself *C* 618; ~ **to an ende** come to an end *Pa* 359; **fares over** goes over, crosses *G* 699; **fares forth** goes, moves *C* 1683; *imp pl fares wel* farewell *G* 2149; **are ... faren** have gone *G* 1231; **were faren** had passed *C* 403

fasor *n* maker, creator *Pe* 431*

fasoun *n* form, construction *Pe* 983; manner, style *Pe* 1101

fast *adj* firm *G* 1636

fast(e) *adv* fast *C* 380 +; firmly *G* 782, 1805, hard, vigorously *Pe* 54, *G* 1908; strictly *C* 1147; earnestly *Pe* 150, *C* 936, *G* 1042, 2403; **as** ~ at once *C* 440, 1648, *G* 1425

fasure *n* fashion, construction *Pe* 1084

fates *pres* fades, loses pristine quality *Pe* 1038

fathmes *pres* gropes *Pa* 273; *pa* **fathmed** embraced *C* 399

fat *adj* fatted *C* 627*, *pa ppl* **fatted** fattened *C* 560

faut(e) *n* fault, flaw, blemish *C* 1122, *G* 2488; faultiness, wrongdoing *C* 236, 571, 680, 725, *G* 1551; flawed condition *G* 2435; *pl* **fautes** defects, deficiencies *C* 1736; sins *C* 177, 996, vices *C* 694

fautles(se) *adj* faultless, without defect *C* 794*, *G* 640, 1761; *super* **fautleste** *G* 2363

fauty *adj* sinful, guilty of wrongdoing *C* 741, *G* 2382, 2386

favour *n* personal attribute that recommends one to favour *Pe* 428;

thurgh gret ~ by special grace *Pe* 968

fax *n* hair *Pe* 213, *C* 790, 1689, *G* 181

fay *n* faith; **in** ~ *Pe* 263, (**par**) **ma** ~ *Pe* 489, *G* 1495 by my faith, indeed

faile *v* fail *Pe* 34, *subj* **faile** should fail *C* 548, *pa* and *pa ppl* **fayled(e)** failed *C* 1631, *G* 1295; fail in a pledge *G* 1067, *pa* 2357; **of ...**

faile(d) fail(ed) to get *Pe* 317, *C* 889; *2s pres* **failes** fail *G* 455, lack opportunity *G* 278; *pres pl* **faulen** are lacking *C* 737; *pres ppl*

faylande lacking *C* 1535; proved defective or unreliable *C* 236, *G* 641, 658; perished *Pe* 270; **there fayled him** he lacked *Pa* 181;

fayled hem they ran out of *C* 1194, **was hem** ~ had come to an end for them *C* 658; **fayled the chere** the colour went out of his cheeks *C* 1539, ~ **the sunne** the sun set *C* 1758

fayn *adj* and *adv* glad(ly) *Pe* 393, *C* 962, 1629, *Pa* 155, *G* 388, 840, 1067, 2019; **thereof** ~ glad of it *C* 1752; ~ **of** glad of *Pe* 450, pleased with *C* 642; *super* **faynest** gladdest, most joyful *C* 1219

fayr(e) (1) *adj* fair, lovely *Pe* 46 +, fine *C* 1106, goodly, becoming *C* 729; without irregularity or blemish *C* 593; desirable *Pe* 490*, reputable; *comp* as *n* **the fayrer** the better, the advantage *G* 99; *super* **fayrest(e)** most beautiful *C* 207, 253, 1043, *Pa* 444, *G* 943; finest *C* 115, *G* 1381, most eligible *C* 1378

fayr(e) (2) *adv* in the proper manner *C* 294, 506, 639, *G* 885, 1556; decorously *G* 1551; accurately *Pe* 884, 1024, *C* 316, *G* 2309, well *C* 27, 639, *G* 622, properly *G* 1282; pleasantly *G* 2229, pleasingly *Pe* 88, *C* 1486, *G* 880; respectfully *Pe* 714, *C* 89, *G* 1046, 1961; calmly, smoothly *G* 367; *comp* (**the**) **fayrer** the more fairly *Pe* 103, more beautifully *G* 1315; *super* **fayrest** most finely *C* 115

fayrye *n* magic *G* 240

fayth(e) *n* (good) faith, fidelity, truth to one's duty or word *G* 1783; creed *C* 1168; feudal and/or religious faith to one's lord *C* 1161, 1165; ~ **dedes** honourable deeds *C* 1775; **in (good) ~**, **by my ~** indeed *G* 279, 986, 1435; truly *C* 1732, *G* 381&, faithfully *G* 2364, **on my ~** *G* 2469; **by thy ~** on your honour *G* 2284

faythely *adv* truly, indeed G 1636

faythful *adj* faithful, loyal, true C 1167, G 632, 1679

feble *adj* poor, humble C 47*, 145; weak C 101; *super* **feblest** most inadequate, weakest G 354

fech(e) *v* fetch *Pe* 1158*, G 1375; get G 396, receive G 1857; ~ **forth** bring out C 1429; *pres* **feches** brings *Pa* 58, G 2013; *imp* **fech** C 621, *pl* **feches** fetch, bring C 98, 100; *subj* **feche** *Pe* 847; *pa* **feched** brought back C 1155

fede *pres pl* feed G 1359; *pa ppl* **fedde** fed, fattened C 56

fee *n* payment, perquisite; portion of game due by convention to specific huntsmen G 1355, 1358, *pl* **fees** perquisites G 1622; land-holdings, tenements C 960

fel *pa* (of **falle**) fell *Pe* 57, 1174, *Pa* 215, G 430; sank back C 450; dropped G 1758; *subj* **felle** should befall C 914*, G 1588; *pa pl* **fel(le)(n)** fell *Pe* 1120, C 221, 399, G 1425, **fel on** attacked G 1904, **fel in** came across G 1699; *pa ppl* **fallen** fallen C 559, *Pa* 320, G 1432; withered down C 1684; befallen, happened G 23, 2528, come C 304

felawes *n pl* companions; fellow hounds G 1702

felawschyp *n* company C 1764, G 2151; friendship G 651; sexual partnership C 271

felde (1) *n* field *Pa* 435, C 1750, open land surrounding a town C 98, 1767; battlefield G 874; *pl* **feldes** fields C 370

felde (2) see **folde**

felde (3) see **fele** (2)

fele (1) *adj and pron* many *Pe* 21 +; **on ~ wyse** in many a way; *comp* **feler** more G 1391

fele (2) *v* sense G 2193; experience with the senses C 1019, taste C 107; *subj* **fele** feel G 2272; *imp pl* **feles** be aware, understand *Pa* 121; *pa* **felde** was conscious of *Pe* 1087

felefolde *adj* manifold, multiple G 1545

felle (1) *n* hill, upland G 723

felle (2) *n* skin G 943; animal's pelt G 1359, 1944; *pl* **felles** hides, pelts G 880, 1737

felle (3) *adj* severe *Pe* 655; harsh *Pe* 367, C 1737; fierce C 421, G 291, 717, 847*, 874, savage C 283, grim C 139, formidable G 2222; cruel, painful C 156, 954; as *n* **the felle** the fierce creature G 1585

felle (4) *adv* cruelly C 1040

felle(n) see **fel**

felly *adv* sternly, grimly C 559, fiercely G 2302, grievously C 571

felonye *n* crime, offence, wickedness *Pe* 800, C 205

feloun *n* traitor C 217*

felt *pa ppl* (of *'felte'*) stuck together C 1689*

fememales *n gen on ~ wyse* in the manner of a female C 696

fende (1) *n* fiend, devil C 205, 269, G 1944, 2193; *pl fendes* devils C 221, 1341, devilish men Pa 82; *gen pl fendene* of fiends C 224

fende (2) *pres pl ~ of* ward off C 1191

feng see **fonge**

fenny *adj* muddy, unclean C 1113

fer (**ferre** G 1093) *adj and adv* far Pe 334+; far away Pa 424; *comp ferre* *adj* farther C 1732, on the farther side Pe 148, *adv* further Pe 103+, further on, onwards C 131, 1780, G 378, 1462, very far C 1764, furthermore Pe 544, G 1105, 2121

ferde (1) *n* fear C 386, Pa 183, 215, G 2130, 2272

ferde (2) *pa* (of 'fere') feared G 1285, 1588; *part adj* afraid C 897, 975, G 2382

ferde(n) (3) see **fare** (2)

fere (1) *n* companion G 695, 915; peer, equal G 675; beloved one C 1062, spouse G 2411; **in ~** together Pe 89, 884, 1105, C 696; with an (armed) company G 267*; **fellen in ~** came together C 399; *pl feres* companions Pe 1150, G 594

fere (2) *adj* hale, strong and healthy G 103

feres *pres* carries, bears; conveys Pe 98; *pa ppl feryed* conveyed Pe 946, **~ out** carried out C 1790

ferk *v* go G 1072, 1973; **ferk(es) (him) uppe** get(s) up Pa 187, C 897, G 2013; *pres ferkes* proceeds, moves G 173; *imp pl ferkes* go C 98*; *pa ferked(e)* passed, went C 133; (of water) ran G 2173

ferly (1) *n* wonder, marvel Pe 1086, G 716, paranormal event C 1529, 1563, 1629; *pl ferlyes* G 23; **no ferly** no wonder G 2414

ferly (2) *adj* wondrous, marvellous Pe 1084; *adv* wondrously, remarkably, very C 269, 960, 974, G 388, 741, 1694

ferlyly *adj* marvellous, showing amazing skill C 1460*; *adv* wondrously, very C 962, G 796; in such a way as to cause wonder G 2494

ferre see **fer**

fersly(che) *adv* fiercely, vigorously G 832, 1323; sternly Pa 337, haughtily G 329

feryed see **feres**

fest(e) (1) *n* feast C 548, G 44, 101, 894; meal provided for guest(s), entertainment C 642; feast day G 537, 1036, festival season G 1963, 2401; **ma ~** rejoice Pe 283; **high ~** major festival period G 1963

fest (2) *pa* confirmed, concluded G 2347; *pa ppl fest* placed, set Pa 290

festen *v* (*pres festnes*; *pa and pa ppl festned*) bind, fasten *imp pl* C 156, fastened, tied C 1255; (of a covenant) pledge(d) C 327, G 1783, concluded G 2329; **festnes the fete** plants his feet Pa 273

festeres *pres* causes to decay C 1040

festival *adj* suitable for a festival C 136*

festnes, festned see **festen**

fete (1) see **fote**

fete (2) *n* feat, deed: **in** ~ in action C 1106
feted *pa* acted G 1282
fetherbeddes *n pl* feather mattresses Pa 158
fetly *adv* neatly C 585, in a comely fashion G 1758
fette *v* fetch C 627, 802, receive G 451; *pa ppl fette* brought, fetched G 1084
fetteles *pres* ~ **him** settles himself Pa 435; *pa ppl fettled* set C 585, Pa 38, G 656; put together, fashioned C 343
fettres *n pl* fetters, foot shackles C 156, 1255
fetures *n pl* body parts C 794, G 145, 1761
fetyse *adj* neat, elegant, well fashioned C 174; *as n* fine touch, skill C 1103
fetysely *adv* neatly, skilfully C 1462
fewe *adj* few, small in amount C 1735; *pron* a small number Pa 438, 521
figure *n* form, visible appearance Pe 170, 747, 1086; written symbol, letter C 1726; geometrical figure G 627; *pl figures* forms, shapes C 1460
fildore *n* thread of gold Pe 106, G 189
first(e) *adj and adv* first Pe 486 +; originally Pe 638, C 1718, G 2524; first of all Pa 503, C 1530, 1634; beforehand Pe 316, Pa 225; before G 2227; **of** ~ first, originally C 1714*; **at the** ~ at once Pe 635; **(up)on** ~ at first G 528, at the first, at the beginning G 491, first of all, before G 2019, speaking first G 1477; **bigges upon** ~ founds G 9; **I schal ... upon** ~ I will be the first to G 1934; *as n* first day G 1072, **the** ~ the first man/men Pe 548, 549, 570, 571
fissche *n* fish C 531, Pa 251, 262, 337, G 503; *pl fisches* Pa 143, C 288, G 890
flagh see **fle**
flake *n* spot, flaw Pe 947*; *pl flakes* flakes C 954
flakerande *pres ppl* fluttering C 1410
flambe *v* flame, shine Pe 769
flaumbande *pres ppl* flaming, brilliant Pe 90*, C 1468
flavores *n pl* fragrances, scents Pe 87
flayed *pa* terrified C 960, 1723, Pa 215
flayn see **flye** (1)
fle *v* flee C 377, 914, G 2125, 2130, hurry, rush Pe 294; *2s pres fles* G 2272*; *pa flagh* flew, fled G 2274, 2276, **fledde** fled G 1628, *pl flowen* C 945, 975; *pa ppl flowen* Pa 424; **was flowen** had fled Pa 183, 214
flem *n* moving flow, stream Pa 309
fleme *v* banish C 287; *pres flemes* chases, puts to flight C 31; banishes C 596, *subj fleme* Pe 334

flesch *n* body *Pe* 306 + ; flesh *C* 287, 1040, *G* 943, 2313; dead flesh *C* 462, venison *G* 1363; bodily or physical life *C* 356, physical creature(s) *C* 303, 403, 560

fleschly(che) *adj* physical, bodily *Pe* 1082, *C* 265

flet(e) *n* hall floor *Pe* 1058, *G* 294, 568, 832*, 859, 1374, 1653, 1925

flete *v* overflow, overspread *C* 685*; *pres fletes* floats *C* 1025; *pa flot(te), flote* floated *Pe* 46; was carried on the water *C* 421; floated, swam *C* 432, *Pa* 248; *pa pl flete* floated, sped *G* 1566, **fleten** floated *Pe* 21, **flette** were afloat *C* 387; *pa ppl floten* borne, removed *G* 714

flewe see **flye** (2)

flood *n* water *C* 531, 538, watercourse *Pe* 1058, *G* 2173, flood *C* 369, 397, 404, 415, 429, 450, sea *Pe* 736, *Pa* 126, 183, 221, 309; **French** ~ English Channel *G* 13; *pl flodes* waters *Pe* 874, *C* 324

flok *n* group of followers *Pe* 947; *pl flokkes* troops, companies *C* 837, 1767

flocked *pa pl ~ in* flocked together *C* 386, *G* 1323

flonc *pa* flung (myself), dashed *Pe* 1165*

flone *n* arrow *G* 1161; *pl flones* *G* 1566

flor(e) *n* hall floor *C* 133, *G* 834, 1932

flor-de-lys *n* fleur-de-lis, lily *Pe* 195, 753

flosche *n* pool, swampy tract of land *G* 1430

flot(e) (1) *n* flock, company *Pe* 786, 946, *C* 1212; liquid matter *C* 1011

flot(te) (2), **flote(n)** see **flete**

flour *n* flower *Pe* 29; (*metaphor for person*) *Pe* 962; **of vyrgyn** ~ from a virginal flower of womankind *Pe* 426; *pl flowres* flowers *G* 507; flower designs *C* 1476, flower-shaped parts of metalwork, fleurons *Pe* 208

floury *adj* flower-strewn *Pe* 57

flowed *pa* flowed *C* 397, flowed forth *C* 428

floweren see **fle** and **flye** (2)

flowred *pa* flowered *Pe* 270

flowres see **flour**

flurted *pa ppl (of French 'floreter')* formed into a flower-shaped ornamental design *Pe* 208*

flye (1) *v* cut, wound *Pe* 812; *pa ppl flayn* lacerated *Pe* 809

flye (2) *v* fly up *G* 524; *pa flewe* flew *Pe* 431, *C* 432, *G* 459; *pa pl floweren* flew *Pe* 89, *C* 1010

flies *n pl* butterflies *C* 1476, *G* 166

flyght *n* flight, act of fleeing *C* 377; (bird's) flight *C* 457, 530

flyt *n* contention, strife *C* 421

flyte *v* argue, dispute at law *Pe* 353; *pres ppl flytande* contending *C* 950

fnasted *pa* snorted, snuffled *G* 1587, 1702

fo *n* foe, enemy *G* 716; *collective s* *C* 1219; *pl* **foes** *C* 1767; cf. **foo**

foches *pres* (variant of 'feches': see **fech(e)**) takes *G* 1961

fode *n* food *Pe* 88, *C* 339, 1194, *G* 503

fodes *n pl* creatures *C* 466*

foes see **fo**

fogge *n* grass *C* 1683

fol (1) *n* fool *C* 750, *G* 2414; moral fool, sinner *C* 996; *pl* **foles** those without moral discernment *C* 202, *Pa* 121

fol (2) *adj* (morally) foolish, blind *Pa* 283

folde (1) *n* land *G* 23, 1014; ground *C* 477, *G* 524, 1694; earth, world *C* 257, 287, 540, 950, 1665; **of** ~ out of the land *Pe* 334; **the Fader of ~ and flod** the Father who created and governs land and sea *Pe* 736; (**up**)**on** ~ on (the) earth, in this world *C* 251&, *G* 196&, in that place *G* 2373; **on (the)** ~ on the ground *C* 1043, *G* 189

folde (2) (**felde** *G* 841*) *v* (*pres* **foldes**, *pl* **folden**; *pa* **folded**, *pa ppl* **folde(n)**) bend, bow down *Pe* 813; enfold(ed) *Pa* 309, *G* 841; enfolded, wound about *G* 959; interlaced, interwoven *G* 189; ? accords *G* 499*; turn, return *G* 1363; put *C* 1026 (*imp*); hand(ed) over, give(n) *G* 1783*, *imp pl* 359; *pa ppl* **folde up** upturned *Pe* 434, **up folden** held up *C* 643

fole *n* horse *G* 173, 196, 695*, 803; *gen* ~ **wombes** horse bellies *C* 1255; ~ **hoves** horse hooves *G* 459

foler *n* foliage *C* 1410

foles (1) see **fol** (1)

foles (2) *pres* takes leave of (his) senses *C* 1422

folk *n* people *C* 100+; nation *C* 730, 1161; company, community *C* 224, 960, 1014, *G* 54, 1566; servants, attendants *G* 816, 1126, 1374; *gen pl* **on folkene wyse** in the manner of human men *C* 271

folwe *v* follow (*pres* **folwes**, *pl* **folwes**; *imp* **folw**; *pa* **folwed**) follow(s), followed *Pe* 127+; pursue(s), pursued *C* 918, *G* 1164, 1895; issued in response to *Pe* 654; gave allegiance to *C* 1165, attended *G* 2422, **folwes ... after** serves, attends on *C* 6; **folwed ... tille** made (their) way to *C* 1752; *pres ppl* **folwande** following *C* 429, 1212, in accordance (with) *Pe* 1041, *G* 145, **of ~ sute** matching *G* 859

foly *n* folly *Pa* 122*, *G* 324*, 1545

folyly *adv* in a morally stupid way, sinfully *C* 696

foman *n* foeman, enemy *C* 1175

fon see **fyne** (3)

fonde (1) *v* try *Pe* 150, *G* 986; try out, test the truth of *G* 291; try by undergoing *G* 565; seek out, direct one's steps to *Pe* 939; *pa* **fonded** tested *G* 1549; sought *C* 1103, *G* 2125, 2130; *pa ppl* **fonte** scrutinized, scanned *Pe* 170*

fonde (2) see **fynde**

fonge *v* (pres **fonges**, *pl fonges*; *pa fong*, **feng**, *pl fonge(s)*; *pa ppl fonge(d)*, **fongen**) take, receives, receive(d) *Pe* 439 +; receive(d) socially, accept(ed) as a guest *G* 816, 919, accept into company or care *G* 1315*; took up *Pe* 884; **fonges/feng to the flyght** takes/took to flight *C* 377, 457

font *n* vessel for baptismal water *C* 164

fonte see **fonde** (1)

foo *adj* hostile, threatening *G* 1430; *adv* as a foe *G* 2326

fooschip *n* enmity *C* 918, 919; cf. **fo**

for *prep* for *Pe* 211 +; because of *Pe* 50 +; in exchange for *Pa* 512, *G* 1055; despite *Pe* 890, *G* 2132, 2251; before *G* 1822; as *G* 479, 1964; with regard to *C* 867; leading to *C* 75; *conj* for, because *Pe* 71 +; and so *C* 1529; *before* 'to' + *inf* (see p. xxv) *Pe* 613 +; *followed by adj* because of being *C* 1595, *Pa* 6, 144, *G* 1440

forbede *subj* forbid *Pe* 379; *pres* **forbedes** forbids *C* 1147; *pa ppl forboden* forbidden *C* 45, 826, 998

forbi *prep* ~ **all thinges** above all *G* 652, ~ **all other** above all other men *Pa* 483

forbrent *pa ppl* burnt up, destroyed (itself) in its own flames *Pe* 1139

forde *n* place where water can be crossed (by wading or by boat), crossing place *Pe* 150, *G* 1585, 1617; *pl* **fordes** water crossings *G* 699

fordidden *pa pl* destroyed, dispelled *Pe* 124*

fordolked *pa ppl* badly wounded *Pe* 11

forfare *v* destroy, bring to ruin *C* 1168, *Pa* 483

forferde *pa* (of 'forfere') put an end to, killed *G* 1617; caused destruction *C* 1051; perished *C* 560, 571

forfete *v* forfeit *Pe* 639, *C* 177; *subj* **forfete** transgress *C* 743*; *pa and pa ppl* **forfeted** forfeited *Pe* 619; transgressed *G* 2394

forgart(e) *pa pl* forfeited *C* 240; *pa ppl* **forgart** *Pe* 321

forgat see **forgete**

forged *pa ppl* constructed *C* 343

forgef see **forgyve**

forgete *v* (see also **foryete**) forget *Pe* 86; *pa* **forgat** forgot *C* 203, *G* 1472, 2031

forgo *v* lack, be deprived of *Pe* 328, *G* 2210; *pres* **forgos** goes without *Pe* 340

forgyve *v* forgive *C* 731, *Pa* 404; *pa* **forgef** forgave *Pa* 407

forhedes *n pl* foreheads, brows *Pe* 871

forjusted *pa ppl* defeated in combat on horseback *C* 1216

forlete *pa* lost, was deprived of *Pe* 327; cf. **forlotes**

forlonge *n* furlong (a linear measure of approximately one-eighth of a mile); **twelve** ~ **space** the length of twelve furlongs *Pe* 1030

forlotes *imp pl* (from *ON* variant of **forlete**) omit, pass over *C* 101

forloyne *v* err, go astray *C* 750, *subj* *Pe* 368; *pa* **forloyne** strayed from *C* 1165, left behind; *part adj* **forloyne(d)** erring *C* 1155, off course, out of line *C* 282

formadde *part adj* deranged, irrational *Pa* 509

forme (1) *n* form *Pe* 1209, *C* 173, 1535, *Pa* 38, *G* 1295; outward form and appearance *C* 253, *G* 145; manner *G* 2130; *pl* **formes** representational designs *C* 1468; images furnished by a discourse *C* 3

forme (2) *n* and *adj* first *C* 257, *Pa* 38, *G* 499, 2373, original, earliest *Pe* 639; *super* **formast** foremost, first *C* 494

forme (3) *imp* form, make *C* 316; *pa* and *pa ppl* **formed** created *C* 560, 1665, *Pa* 92, formed, fashioned *Pe* 747, *C* 1341, ~ **out** fashioned so as to project *C* 1462

forne *adv* formerly *G* 2422

forpayned *pa ppl* overcome by anguish *Pe* 246

forray *v* gather provisions (in time of war) *C* 1200

forsake *v* (*pres pl* **forsake(n)**; *pa* **forsoke**, *pa ppl* **forsaken**) make denial *G* 475; reject, abandon *Pe* 743, *G* 2380; declined *C* 75, reject(ed) (an offered gift) *Pa* 332, *G* 1826, 1846; repudiated *C* 210

forselet *n* fortified place, fortress *C* 1200

forser *n* coffer, strong-box *Pe* 263

forsettes *imp pl* block the way (of), cause to stop *C* 78

forsoke see **forsake**

forsothe *adv* in truth, indeed *Pa* 212

forst *n* frost *C* 524, *G* 1694

forth *adv* forward, on(wards) *Pe* 98 +; out *C* 77 +

forth-dayes *adv* well into the day *G* 1072*

further *v* put into action, carry out *C* 304

furthering *vn* furtherance (of), promotion (of) *C* 3

forthikke *adv* very thickly *C* 226

forth-naghtes *adv at* ~ well into the night *C* 1764

forthoghte see **forthynkes**

forthrast *pa ppl* crushed, shattered *C* 249

forthy *adv* therefore *Pe* 137 +, for that reason, on that account *Pe* 234, *C* 1245, *G* 240, 1025, so *G* 500

forthynkes (*impers v*) *pres* **me** ~ I regret *C* 285; *subj* **if thee forthynk** if it grieves you *Pa* 495; (*personal v*) *pa* **forthoghte** regretted *C* 557

fortune *n* fortune, chance, the turn taken by events *Pe* 98, *G* 99; the mutability of this world *Pe* 306; (*personified*) *Pe* 129

forw *n* furrow, channel *G* 2173; *pl* **forwes** trenches made by a ploughshare *C* 1547

forward *n* pledge, covenant, bargain *C* 327, 1742, *G* 1105, 1395, 1636, 2347; *pl* **forwardes** terms of an agreement *G* 378, 409, 1405, 1934

forwonder *n* great wonder *G* 147*

forwondered *part adj* amazed *G* 1660

forwroght *part adj as n* (men) worn out with toil *Pa* 163

foryelde *subj (in prayer)* repay, reward *G* 839, 1279, 1435, 2429; cf. **yelde**

foryete *v* (see also **forgete**) overlook, pardon *C* 739; *pres* **foryetes** ignores *C* 1660, *pl* **foryeten** disregard, neglect *C* 1528*; *pa* **foryete** forgot *C* 463, *pa ppl* **foryeten** forgotten *G* 1485

foster *n* offspring *C* 257

fote *n* foot *C* 432, 477, *Pa* 187, *G* 422, 2276, 2363; base *Pe* 161; (*as measurement*) foot *G* 2225, footstep *Pe* 350, 970, *C* 1200, *G* 2151*; **to ~ and to hande** hand and foot *C* 174; *pl* **fete** *Pe* 1120+, (*at line ending*) **fotes** *G* 574; (**up**)**on fote** on foot *C* 79, 88, 914, *G* 329, 2363, **on his fote** *G* 2229

foule (1) *adj* dirty *C* 140; rotten *C* 462; evil, wicked *G* 717; unlovely, worthless *G* 1944; *super* **foulest** worst, least impressive *G* 1329

foule (2) *adv* foully, grossly *C* 1790; badly *G* 2378*

fouled *pa* became foul *C* 269; *pa ppl* made dirty; soiled, defiled *C* 1495; cf. **defoule** and **defowle**

foundande see **foundes**

founde(n) see **fynde**

foundered *pa ppl* struck to the ground *C* 1014

foundes *pres* walks *G* 1585, 2229; sets off, departs, separates *C* 1764; *imp pl* **foundes** go *C* 903; *pres ppl* **foundande to** proceeding to, heading for *Pa* 126; *pa ppl* **founded** proceeded *G* 267

founs *n* bottom, river-bottom *Pe* 113, sea-bottom *C* 1026

four *num* four *Pe* 870+; **on all ~** on all four limbs *C* 1683

fowle *n* bird *C* 474, 530, 538; *pl* **fowles** birds *Pe* 89 *C* 56, 1410

foysoun *n* abundance, plenty *G* 122; *adj* abundant, plentiful *Pe* 1058

fraunchis(e) *n* (a) privileges and status that are the opposite of servitude *Pe* 609*; (b) generous acts, handsome behaviour, magnanimity *C* 750, *G* 651*, 1264

frayes *pres* frightens, terrifies *C* 1553*

frayn *v* try, undergo *G* 489*; *pres* **fraynes** puts to the test, makes trial of *Pe* 129; *pa* **frayned** asked, enquired *G* 703, 1046, 2494; made trial of *G* 1549*; *pa ppl* **frayned** asked, sought *G* 359

frayst(e) *v* seek *G* 279, 409*; **to ~ the trauthe** to tell the truth *C* 1736*; 2&3s *pres* **fraystes** seek(s) *G* 455; tests, subjects to rigour *G* 503*; *imp* **frayst** seek, ask *G* 1395; *pa* **frayste** examined *Pe* 169; *pa ppl* **frayst** sought *G* 324, 391; **fraysted** tested *G* 1679

fre *adj* having the status and conduct of the well-born *Pe* 796; of high status *C* 607, 861, *G* 1885; great *C* 275; noble, fine *Pe* 299, *C* 203, 1062, *G* 101, 803, 1961; liberal, generous *Pe* 481, *G* 847; honourable *C* 474, *G* 1156; above wrongdoing *C* 741; *as n* freemen

C 88; **my** ~ my lady G 1545; **that** ~ that noblewoman G 1549, 1783, that worthy person C 929, *super* **the freest** the greatest persons G 2422

freke *n* man C 177 +; (*in address*) G 2274; *gen* **frekes** man's G 537; *pl* **frekes** C 79 +

freloker *comp adv* more nobly, more elegantly C 1106

frelý(che) *adj* noble, excellent, magnificent C 162, *Pa* 214; smart, elegant C 173; *as n* lovely one *Pe* 1155

frelý *adv* so as to show good will, courteously G 816, 894; generously, amply *Pa* 20; without restriction *Pa* 390

frende *n* loyal follower, supporter C 642; ally, patron *Pe* 1204*, C 1229; (*in address*) friend *Pe* 558, C 139; *pl* **friendes** friends C 399, 861, G 987; loyal allies C 721; acquaintances, compatriots G 714

fres *pa* froze G 728

fresch(e) *adj* fresh, refreshing *Pe* 87; vivid *Pe* 1086*; unsullied C 173, G 2019; *as n* **that ~ as flor-de-lys** she who was blooming as a lily *Pe* 195*; **the** ~ fresh food G 122

freschly *adv* with energy G 1294

fretes *pres* eats into C 1040; *pa ppl* **freten** devoured C 404

frette *imp* freight, load C 339

fretted *pa ppl* inlaid, studded C 1476

frith *n* woodland *Pe* 89, 98, 103, C 534, G 1430, 1973, 2151; **fyr** ~ fir forest C 1680*; *pl* **frithes** woodlands G 695

fro *prep* from *Pe* 13 +; *conj* from the time that *Pe* 251, 375, C 353, 1325; after C 833, G 8, 62; ~ **that** after *Pe* 958, from the time that C 1198; ~ **first that** from the first, when C 1069; *adv* **to ne ~** (neither) forwards nor backwards *Pe* 347

frok *n* gown, robe C 136; *pl* **frokkes** C 1742

frothande *pres ppl* foaming up to form a scum C 1721

frount *n* brow, countenance *Pe* 177, G 959

frunt *pa* struck, hit *Pa* 187

fruyt *n* fruit C 245, 1043, 1044, 1468; any edible product of plants and trees *Pe* 29; **newe** ~ first fruits (of a harvest) *Pe* 894; *pl* **fruytes** fruits *Pe* 87, 1078

fryst *v* grant (a period of time) as respite C 743

ful(le) *adj* full *Pe* 1098, C 1599, *Pa* 20, G 44*; *adv* very, very much, most *Pe* 80 +; fully, completely *Pe* 860, **to the** ~ completely C 120, 343

fulfyll *v* complete C 164, *pa* **fulfyll** C 1732; observe fully C 264

fulwed *pa ppl* baptized C 164

fundament *n* base, foundation *Pe* 1010; *pl* **fundamentes** *Pe* 993

further *adj* fourth *Pe* 1005

fuyt *n* trail of prey G 1425, 1699

fyched *pa ppl* fixed, pinned G 658

fyf see **fyve**

fyght (1) *n* fight, physical combat *C* 275, *G* 279

fyght (2) *v* fight, engage in combat *G* 278, 717, *pres pl* *C* 1191; *pres ppl* **fyghtande** conflicting, contending *C* 404; *pa pl* **foght** fought *G* 874, **faght** contended *Pe* 54; *vn in* **fyghtynges wyse** in guise of war *G* 267*

fyked *pa* retreated, ran away *G* 2274

fyled (1) *pa ppl* filed, sharpened *G* 2225; ~ **out** carved to project outward *C* 1460

fyled (2) *pa ppl* soiled *C* 136*

fylle *pres pl* fill *C* 111; fulfil, carry out *G* 1405, 1934; *pres* **fylles** fills *C* 462; *imp pl of ... hem fylles* fill them with *C* 1433; *pa ppl* **fyllid** filled *C* 104, 1008

fylsen *v* assist, support *G* 99; *pa* **fylsened** *C* 1167, 1644

fylder *pres pl* join together, copulate *C* 696; grapple, contend *C* 1191, *G* 986; mass confusedly, throng *C* 224; *pa ppl* **fylderid** tangled *C* 1689

fylthe *n* dirt, unclean matter *Pe* 1060, *Pa* 290; (moral or literal) impurity *C* 6, 31, 1122, 1721, 1798, *G* 1013, 2436; ~ (of the **flesch**) sexual perversion *C* 202, 251, 265, 355, 547, 559, 574, 680, 730, 845, 923, 1051; *pl* **fylthes** kinds of uncleanness *C* 14

fylyoles *n pl* ?spires, ?towers *C* 1462*, *G* 796*

fynde *v* (2&3s *pres* **fyndes**; *subj* **fynde** *C* 466, 902; *pa* **fonde**, *subj* *G* 1875*, *pl* **founde(n)**; *pa ppl* **founde(n)**) find(s), found *Pe* 150+; will find *C* 587; find out *C* 1554; devised *C* 694; seeks out *C* 1295; took to, took up *C* 265; discerned, saw *C* 133, **fande** *Pe* 871; *vn* **fyndyng** act of finding, search *G* 1433

fyne (1) *adj* fine, excellent *Pe* 170, 1204, *C* 721, 794, 1742, *G* 919, 1761; pure, absolute *G* 1239*; (of metals) pure, unalloyed *Pe* 106; (of precious stones) without defect *C* 1122; (of agreements) formal, drawn up in proper legal form *G* 1636*

fyne (2) *adv* finely *G* 1737; exactly *G* 173; fully, completely *Pe* 635; **fynly** wholly, unreservedly *G* 1391

fyne (3) *v* finish, die *Pe* 328; *subj* cease *Pe* 353; *imp* **fyne thou never** don't stop *C* 929; *pa* **fon** ended *C* 369, terminated *Pe* 1030, **fyned** came to an end *C* 450

fynger *n* finger; *pl* **fyngres** fingers *C* 1103, 1533, 1553, 1723, *G* 641; fingers' breadths *G* 1329; finger-like pendants *G* 1833

fynisment *n* completion, end *G* 499

fynly see **fyne** (2)

fynne *n* fin *C* 531

fyoles, vyoles *n pl* (Vulgate *phialae*) small glass drinking vessels *C* 1280, 1476*

fyr *n* ~ **frith** fir forest *C* 1680*

fyrce *adj* fierce, violent *Pe* 54; disposed to fight *C* 101; daring, presumptuous *C* 217
fyrment *n* firmament, heaven *C* 221
fyste *n* the hand when the fingers are closed to conceal the palm *C* 1534, 1723, hand *G* 391
fythel *n* fiddle, stringed instrument played with bow *C* 1082
fyther *n* feather *C* 1026; *pl* **fytheres** wing feathers *C* 530, 1484
fyve (**fyf** *Pe* 849) *n and adj* five *G* 627&; **tho** ~ five of those, five times as much *Pe* 451

gafe see **gif**

galle (1) *n* bile *C* 1022; **gawle** rancour, ill-will *Pe* 463
galle (2) *n* (spot of) filth, stain *Pe* 189*, 915, scum *Pe* 1060, *Pa* 285
game *n* game *G* 273, 283, 365, 692; device, design *G* 661*; pleasure *G* 1536, recreation *G* 1014, 1314, pastime *G* 1532*; sport, jest *G* 1376, 1933; game animals, venison *G* 1635; *pl* **gamnes** games *G* 495, 683; sports, diversions *G* 1319, 1894, mirth, entertainment, games *G* 989; cf. **gomenly**
gares *pres* (*pa* **gart**, *pl* **garten**) (+ *inf*) causes/caused (to), makes/made *Pe* 86*, 331, 1151, *C* 690, 896, 1645, *G* 2460; **gart crye** caused to be proclaimed, had proclaimed *C* 1361

garlande *n* coronal, chaplet *Pe* 1186*
garnyst *pa ppl* ~ **of** adorned with *C* 1277

gart(en) see **gares**

garysoun *n* treasure, item(s) of value *G* 1255, 1807, 1837
gate *n* road, path *Pe* 526, *G* 696, 778, way *C* 676, 767, 931, *G* 930, 1967, 2119, free passage *G* 1154; way, means *Pe* 619; **highe** ~ main road, highway *Pe* 395; *pl* **gates** paths *Pe* 1106, routes *G* 709

gaudi *n* beadwork, ornamentation *G* 167*

gave see **gif**

gawle see **galle** (1)

gay (1) *adj* gorgeous, beautiful, splendid *Pe* 7 +; finely dressed *G* 935; lively, gay *C* 830; as *n* **that** ~ that beautiful (one) *Pe* 189, 433, *G* 970, that fine man *G* 2035; (**my**) ~ (my) fair lady *G* 1213, 1822; *super* **gayest** most splendidly accoutred *G* 2023

gay (2), **gayly** *adv* finely, richly, splendidly *C* 1568, *G* 74, 179, 598, 666, 1760

gayn (1) *adj* ready, responsive, obedient *G* 178; good, to be welcomed or celebrated *C* 259, *G* 1241, 2491; suitable, acceptable *C* 749; *super* **at the gaynest** by the most direct route *G* 1973; *adv* readily, directly *G* 1621

gayn (2) *v* be of use or profit to *G* 584; *pres* **gaynes** is of use to, helps, profits *Pe* 343, *Pa* 348*, *G* 1829; *pres pl* **gaynes** are efficacious *C* 1608; *pa* **gayned** was suited or appropriate to *Pa* 164

gayn (3) *prep* opposite; **over** ~ across on the facing side of *Pe* 138

gayne *n* gains *G* 2349

gaynly *adv* fitly, appropriately *G* 476*, specifically *G* 1297

gaynly(che) *adj* beneficent, gracious *C* 724, *Pa* 83

geder *v* ~ **hem** gather *C* 1363; *pres* **gederes** enters on *G* 2160, ~ **up/**
on hyghte draws up *G* 421, 2260; **gederes/gederen to** make(s)
physical contact with so as to control or manipulate *Pa* 105, *G* 777*;
pa and pa ppl **gedered** gathered *G* 1326, assembled *G* 1566, 1426,
1625

gef see **gif**

gele *v* linger *Pe* 931*

gemme *n* gem, jewel *Pe* 118&; *pl* **gemmes** *Pe* 7 +

gendered *pa ppl* engendered, born *C* 300; cf. **engendered**

gendres *n pl* genera, species *C* 434

generacyoun *n* lineage, origins *Pe* 827

gent *adj* befitting a courtly context; (*of persons*) good, worthy *Pe* 265,
1134; (*of objects*) elegant, superior *Pe* 118, 253, 1014, *C* 1495

gentryse *n* those of gentle birth, the well-born *C* 1159; magnanimity,
courteous care for others *Pa* 398

gentyl(e) (1) *adj* of status *and/or* manners *and/or* disposition
belonging to good or 'gentle' birth *G* 42, 2185; of gentle status *C*
1235, 1257; gracious *Pe* 264*, courtly, courteous, beneficent,
generous *Pe* 605, 632, 895, *G* 774; showing proper feeling, amiable,
pious; (*of objects*) excellent, superior *Pe* 278, 883, 991, *C* 1309, fine
G 1021; **in ~ wyse** in fine fashion *C* 1432; *super* **gentylest** noblest,
of highest birth *C* 1180; most considerate and respectful of others *G*
639; most precious, most valuable *Pe* 1015; *as n that* **gentyl** that
noble one, that worthy one *Pe* 602, *G* 542; **his gentyl** his noblemen
C 1216

gentyl (2) *adj* Gentile *C* 76

Gentyle *gen pl* of the Gentiles *Pa* 62

gentylmen *n pl* well-born men *C* 864

gere *n* equipment, array *C* 16, 1811; armour *G* 569, 584; tackle *Pa*
148, utensils *C* 1505; business, doings *G* 2205; *pl* **geres** accessories,
trappings *G* 1470

geres *pres* ~ **him** gets himself ready *G* 1872; *pa ppl* **gered** arrayed *C*
1568, equipped *G* 179, set out *G* 2227, set in place *C* 1444, *G* 791;
gered with decked or adorned with *C* 1364, *G* 957, decoratively
fashioned from *G* 1832

gest *n* guest *C* 641, *G* 921, 1036, 2055; one who visits or passes
through or arrives at a place *Pe* 277; *pl* **gestes** guests *C* 98, 830,
862, 872, *G* 1024, 1127

get *n* gains *G* 1638, 1871

gete *v* get *Pe* 95, *Pa* 423, *G* 1870, procure; *pres pl* **gete** *Pa* 212; *pa* **gete**

got, put *G* 1571; *pa pl* **geten** seized *G* 1171; *pa ppl* **geten** got, fetched *C* 1505, *G* 1625; acquired *G* 1943; received *G* 2480; **yat** (*C* 66*), **gat** (*G* 1255*) obtained

gettes *n pl* fashions (in clothing or customs) *C* 1354

gif *v* give *G* 288, 297, 365, 1383, 1638, 1829, 2395; *pres* **gives** *C* 1528; *imp* **gif** *Pe* 543, 546, *Pa* 204, *G* 326, 1799; *subj* **gyve** *Pe* 707, 1211, *Pa* 226, *G* 2068; *pa* **gave** (**gef** *Pe* 174) *Pe* 270, 667, *C* 1326, *G* 2073, 2s **gafe** *G* 2349; *pa ppl* **geven** *C* 259, *G* 920, 1500; **is thee geven** has been given to you *C* 1627; **gave ... good day** said goodbye to *G* 668, 1029, 1290; cf. **yef**

gilde, gilt *pa ppl* gilded, overlaid with gold *C* 1344, *G* 569, 777*

gile *n* guile, deceit, dishonesty *Pe* 671, 688, *G* 1787; treachery *Pa* 285

giles *n pl* gills *Pa* 269

gilofre *n* clove-scented flower, gillyflower *Pe* 43

gilt see **gilde**

girdel *n* girdle, belt *G* 1829, 2035, 2037, 2358, 2395, 2429

giserne *n* battleaxe *G* 288, 326, 375, 2265

glace *v* glance, dart, slide *Pe* 171

glad(e) *adj* joyous *Pe* 1144, *C* 1077; cheerful *C* 830; happy *C* 641, *G* 495, 1079, 1245, merry, gay *C* 123, *G* 1926, 1955; ~ **of** pleased with *Pa* 457; bright, splendid *Pe* 136; *comp* **gladder** *Pe* 136; *super* **gladdest** happiest, most radiant *Pe* 1109

glade *v* gladden *C* 1083, *G* 989; *pres* **glades** *Pe* 861; *pres ppl* **gladande** gladdening, cheering *Pe* 171; *pa* **gladed** *C* 499

gladly *adv* willingly *G* 225, with good will *G* 370, 415; *comp* **gladloker** more gladly *G* 1064

gladnes *n pl* sources of gladness, delights *Pe* 136

glam *n* noise, cries *C* 849, *G* 46, 1426, 1652; voice *C* 499, *Pa* 63, speech *C* 830

glaveres *pres pl* verbally deceive *Pe* 688; *pres ppl* **glaverande** noisy *G* 1426*

glaymande *pres ppl* forming slime, viscous *Pa* 269*

glayve *n* spear, lance *Pe* 654

gle *n* delight *Pe* 95*, *G* 1436; music *Pe* 1123, *G* 46, 1652

glede (1) *n* kite, bird of prey *C* 1696

glede (2) *n* bed of burning coals *G* 1609; *pl* **gledes** live coals *G* 891

glem *n* gleam, emitted light *Pe* 79, *C* 218, *G* 604

glemande *pres ppl* gleaming, shining *Pe* 70, 990; *pa* **glemed** gleamed, glittered *G* 598

glemered *pa* flashed, glittered *G* 172

glene *v to ~* to be gleaned *Pe* 955; see **to** (2)

glent (1) *n* glance *G* 1290; ray of glancing light *Pe* 114; *pl* **glentes** glances, expression *Pe* 1144

glent(e) (2) *pa s and pl* (a) glinted, glittered *Pe* 70+; (b) turned aside,

- deviated *Pe* 671*; flinched *G* 2292; sprang *G* 1652; (c) glanced, looked *G* 82, 476
- glet(te)** *n* slime, viscous matter *Pe* 1060, *Pa* 269, muck *C* 306, 573
- glewed** *pa* called aloud *Pa* 164
- glod** see **glydes**
- glode** *n* open space, clearing *G* 2266; *pl* **glodes** open spaces between trees *Pe* 79; (bright) patches *G* 2181
- gloped** *pa* was confounded *C* 849
- glopnedly** *adv* in a frightened manner *C* 896*
- glopnyng** *vn* shock, paralysed terror *G* 2461
- glorious** *adj* and *adv* glorious(ly) *Pe* 799, 915, 1144, *G* 46, 1760, radiant *C* 218
- glory** *n* glory *Pe* 171 (see p. 13), 959, *Pa* 94; beauty *Pe* 934; celebratory praise *Pe* 1123; renown, splendour *C* 1337, 1358; as concrete *n* resplendence, radiance *Pe* 70; **gif ~ to** glorify *Pa* 204
- gloryed** *pa ~ on* gave glory to *C* 1522
- glotounes** *n pl* drunkards, louts *C* 1505
- gloumbes** *pres* frowns, looks displeased; **~ ful little** is little concerned *Pa* 94
- glowande** *pres ppl* glowing, shining *Pa* 94, *G* 236; *pa* **glowed** *Pe* 114
- glydes** *pres* glides, proceeds directly or smoothly *C* 325, 677, 1590, *Pa* 269, *G* 935, passes *G* 748; **~ His gate** goes His way *C* 767; (of light) shines *Pe* 79; *subj* **glyde hence** pass hence (= die) *Pa* 204; *pres ppl* **glydande** walking, proceeding *C* 296, swooping *G* 2266; *pa* **glod** glided, proceeded, came *Pe* 1105*, *C* 499, *Pa* 63, *G* 661
- glyfte** *pa* turned the eyes *Pa* 453, *G* 2265; started or froze with horror *C* 849
- glyght** *pa* (of 'glie') glanced, looked *Pa* 453, *G* 842*, 970; glittered *Pe* 114
- gymme** *n* brightness, radiance *Pe* 1088*
- glysnande** *pres ppl* glistening, gleaming *Pe* 165, 1018
- glyterande** *pres ppl* glittering *G* 2039; *pa* **glytered** sparkled *G* 604
- gnede** *adv* in a scant and niggardly way *C* 146*
- go** (**gon** *Pe* 820) *v* go *Pa* 348, *G* 448, 1024, 1127, 2150; *pres* **gos** goes *C* 341 +, goes out, issues *Pe* 365; moves on legs *C* 677; *pres pl* **gos** *Pe* 510; *imp* **go** *Pe* 559, *pl* **gos** go *Pe* 521, 535, *C* 77, *Pa* 524, *G* 2119; *subj* **go** (*Pe* 530), *pl* **gon** (*C* 1811) may go; *pres ppl* **goande** going, walking *C* 931, *G* 2214; *pa ppl* **gon** gone *Pe* 376, *Pa* 175, **is/was ~** has/had gone *Pe* 63, *G* 1872
- goblotes** *n pl* goblets *C* 1277, 1475
- god** (1) *n* a god, a deity *C* 1324, 1663, *Pa* 164, 171, 199; *pl* **goddes** gods *C* 1165, 1343, 1522, 1525, 1608, 1719
- god** (2) *n* goods, valuables *Pe* 731, 734, *C* 1315, *G* 1064; *pl* **godes** goods *C* 1282, *G* 1944; provisions *C* 1200; good things, blessings,

prosperity *Pa* 286, *C* 1326, 1528; cf. **good(e)**
godelest *super adj* goodliest, greatest *C* 1608
godes see **god** (2)
godly *adv* graciously, good-humouredly, with good will *G* 273, 842, 920, 1376, 1933; decently, rightly *Pa* 26
godlyche *adj* goodly, fine *G* 584; good, kind *C* 753
godnesse *n* goodness *Pa* 407, rightness *Pe* 493
golf *n* gulf, deep water *Pe* 608; *pl* **guferes** gulfs *Pa* 310*
gome *n* man *Pe* 231 +; *pl* **gomes** *C* 99, 1315; (*in address*) *Pa* 199, *pl C* 77
gomenly *adv* happily, joyfully *G* 1079; cf. **game**
gon see **go**
good(e) *adj* good *Pe* 310 +; true *G* 1498; fine *G* 1738, (*ironic*) *C* 1525; (*as sobriquet of Gawain*) *G* 109, 633, 1110, 1297*, 1926, 2214, 2270, 2491; *as n* what is good, good thing *Pe* 33, *G* 1482, behoof, advantage *G* 2031, 2127, worthy man *G* 553, **alle** ~ all good things *Pa* 20; *adv* **for** ~ seriously, truly *G* 965*, 1822; cf. **god** (2)
goodman *n* head of house, host *C* 611, 677, 849, *G* 1029, 1392, 1635, 1932, 1955, 1969; (*in address*) good man *Pa* 524*
gorde *v* hurl, plunge *C* 911; *pa* ~ **to** rushed upon *C* 957*
gore *n* mud, mire *C* 306
gorstes *n pl* gorse-bushes, gorseland *C* 99, 535
gos see **go**
gost *n* spirit *Pe* 63, 86, *C* 325, 728, 1627, *G* 2250; *pl* **gostes of God** spiritual gifts inspired by God *C* 1598*
gostly *adj* spiritual; supernatural *Pe* 185; ~ **dreme** spiritual dream, vision *Pe* 790*
gostlyche *adv* in a paranormal way *G* 2461
gote *n* fast-flowing stream *Pe* 934; *pl* **gotes** spouts of water, streams *Pe* 608, *C* 413, *Pa* 310
goules *n* (*heraldic*) red *G* 619, 663
goun *n* robe, garment *C* 145, dress, costume *G* 2396; *pl* **gounes** robes, (outer) garments *C* 1568
governour *n* leader, overlord *G* 225, (*used of God*) *Pa* 199*; *pl* **governores** rulers *C* 1645
grace *n* (*theological*) grace *Pe* 612*, 425 +, mercy *C* 731, 758, *G* 1215; good fortune, happiness *Pe* 194, *G* 1507; boon, gift, favour *C* 1347, 1522, *G* 2480*; **in Godes** ~ under the protection of God's grace *Pe* 63
gracious *adj* pleasing, grateful to the senses *Pe* 95, 934, *Pa* 453, *G* 216, and/or possessed of spiritual/social grace *Pe* 189, *Pa* 26; *adv* pleasingly *Pe* 260
graciously *adv* with courteous good will *G* 970; becomingly, pleasingly *C* 488

grame *n* (cf. **greme**) anger at oneself *G* 2502; trouble *Pa* 53

grant merci (*French phrase*) thank you *C* 765, *G* 838, 1037, 1392, 2126

grant(e), graunt *v* grant *G* 1218, 1841, consent *C* 765, *G* 1110; *pres* **grantes** grants, permits *G* 921; agrees to, consents to *G* 1103; *pa* and *pa ppl* **granted** *C* 810*, *G* 1683, 1861; acknowledged *Pa* 240

graunt (1) *n* consent, permission *Pe* 317

graunt (2) see **grante**

gravayl *n* gravel, small stones *Pe* 81

graven *pa ppl* inscribed, written *C* 1324, 1544; engraved *C* 1475; buried, interred *C* 1332

grayth *adj* ready *G* 448, 597; harnessed *G* 2047

graythes *pres* arrays *G* 2014; *pa subj* **graythed** would bring *Pa* 53; *pa* **graythed him** prepared himself *G* 2259; *pa ppl* **graythed** disposed, set *C* 1485, *G* 74, 109; made ready *C* 343, *G* 876, equipped *G* 666, arrayed, set out *G* 151

grayth(e)ly *adv* directly *C* 341; properly, justly *Pe* 499, *G* 1335, in a regular way *G* 1470, suitably *G* 417, 876, duly *G* 1006, 1683; firmly *G* 2292; truly *Pa* 240, 286

gre *n pl* pleasure; **at thy** ~ at your will, at your pleasure *Pa* 348

grece see **gres**

gref *n* grief, pain *Pe* 86, *Pa* 83, *G* 2502

grehoundes *n pl* hunting-dogs (used to bring down deer) *G* 1171

greme *n* (*ON equivalent of grame*) anger *Pe* 465, *C* 16, 947, *G* 2299, martial wrath *G* 312; pain, affliction *G* 1507, 2251, 2370

gremen *v* make angry, inflame *C* 1347; *subj* **greme** *Pa* 42; *pa* **gremed** was angered *C* 138

grene *n and adj* green *Pe* 38 +, *adv* *G* 305; *comp* **grener** *G* 235; *adj as* *n* vegetation *C* 1028; **the** ~ the grass, the ground *C* 634, the green colour/apparel *G* 405, 429, 549, **that** ~ that green man *G* 464

grenne *pres pl* grin, smile *G* 464

gres, grece *n* fatty tissue, flesh *G* 425*, 1326, 1378, 2313

gresse *n* grass *Pe* 10, 245, *G* 235, 527, 2181; plant *Pe* 31, *C* 1028

gret(te) *pa* greeted *G* 842, 1933

gret(e) (1) *adj* great *Pe* 237 +; large *Pe* 90 +; main, principal *Pa* 105; **mankynde** ~ the great race of man *Pe* 637; ~ **wordes** threatening talk, braggadocio *G* 312, 325; *as n* **the** ~ the great ones, the great men *C* 1363, *G* 2490; *super* **grettest** most great, supreme *C* 1645, *G* 207, thickest *G* 1326

grete (2) *v* weep, lament *Pe* 331, *G* 2157

gretyng *vn* weeping, wailing *C* 159

greve (1) *n* grove, woodland *Pe* 321, *G* 1355, 1707, 1898, 1974; *pl* **greves** *C* 99, *Pa* 439, *G* 207, 508

greve(n) (2) *v* harm *Pa* 112, 517; offend *Pa* 226; cause to suffer *C*

138, *subj greve* Pe 471, G 1070; *pa greved* took offence, was angered G 316*; were distressed G 1442; *pa ppl greved* upset, offended C 302, 306, 774, Pa 171, 210, afflicted G 2460; cf. **agreved**

greving *vn* grieving, lamenting C 159

grewe *pa* (of 'grow') was generated Pe 425; *pa pl grown* increased C 277

grippes *pres* grasps, grips G 330; *pa gripped* G 214, ~ **to** took hold of G 421, 1335

gromyloun *n* gromwell (plant of the borage family) Pe 43

grone *v* groan G 2157, *pa groned* G 2502; groan in childbirth C 1077

gronyed *pa* grunted G 1442

gropande *pres ppl* probing C 591

gropyng *vn* (medical) manual examination C 1102

grounde (1) *n* ground Pe 81, C 445, 798, 957, G 526, 2294, ground area C 911; floor G 426; world C 1324, 1663, G 2150; place, region G 705; bottom, basis, foundation Pe 372, 384, 396, 408, 420; source, origin C 591; **(in)to** ~ into/to the earth Pe 10+; **put/layde to the** ~ felled C 1214, 1307; **(up)on** ~ in the world C 1363, G 1058, 1070, 2150, on the floor G 417; *pl groundes* fields G 508

grounde(n) (2) see **grynde**

groundelesse *adj* bottomless Pa 310

grovelyng *adv* face downward, prostrate Pe 1120

gruch *v* be unwilling to grant G 2251; *pres pl subj gruchen* are unwilling to give C 1347; *pa gruched* declined, were unwilling C 810*

gruchyng *vn* grumbling Pa 53*; *adv* grudgingly G 2126

grue *n* grain, bit, whit G 2251

gryed *pa* felt revulsion G 2370

grym(me) *adj* gross, dense Pe 1070*; grim, sharp C 1696, G 2260; frightening G 1442, terrifying to see C 1553; *adv grymly* grimly Pe 654; in an awesome manner C 1534

grynde *v* make a grating noise, scrunch Pe 82; *pa ppl grounde* (Pe 654), **grounden** (G 2202) ground, sharpened

gryndel *adj* fierce Pa 524*, G 2338

gryndellayk *n* fierceness G 312

gryndelly *adv* angrily, heatedly G 2299

grysly *adj* fearsome, dreadful to behold C 1534

gryspytyng *vn* gnashing of teeth C 159*

gryste *n* teeth-gnashing Pe 465*

guferes see **golf**

gulty *adj* guilty (of sin) Pa 210, 285; as *n the* ~ the guilty party Pa 175; cf. **gylt-**

gurde *pa ppl* girdled G 1851, girt G 597

gut *n* intestinal organ *Pa* 280; *pl guttes* abdominal organs *Pa* 258,
guts *G* 1336

gye *v* govern *C* 1663; *pres gyes* is lord of *C* 1598, 1627

gylt *n* guilt, guiltiness *Pe* 942, *C* 690, 731, *Pa* 404; *pl gyltes* *Pe* 655

gyltles *adj as n* guiltless person *Pe* 668, 799

gyltyf *adj as n* person guilty of wrongdoing *Pe* 669*

gyn *n* 'engine' (= mechanical contrivance); craft, vessel *C* 491, *Pa*
146

gyng *n* troop, retinue, household *Pe* 455*, *G* 225*

gyngure *n* plant which yields ginger *Pe* 43

gyrdes *pres ~ to* strikes upon *G* 2062, 2160; *pa gorde to* rushed upon
C 957

gyrle *n* child *and/or* young woman *Pe* 205*

gyse *n* guise, dress, array *Pe* 1099

gyve see **gif**

habbes 2&3s and pl pres (used in place of 'hast', 'has', 'have', etc, at line ending) C 75&, G 327&

hach *n* planking, deck; *n* **under ~, under hachches** below deck C 409 Pa 179

had(e) *pa* had Pe 1164 +, brought G 1051; 2s **hades** G 2394; *pl* **had(e)(n)** had C 123 +, brought C 941, G 1446; *pa ppl* **hade** had C 1443, G 1962

hadet *pa ppl* beheaded G 681

haf pres *pl* and imp *s* and *pl* have Pe 257 +; ~ **at thee** look out! G 2288*

hafyng *vn* what is had, possessions Pe 450

halches pres folds, interloops G 1613; *pa* and *pa ppl* **halched** enfolded, entwined G 218, 657, enclosed G 185*, wrapped G 1852; embraced G 939

haldande see **holde** (2)

hales pres moves, proceeds (usually with some vigour and directness) Pe 125, C 458; pres *pl* **hale** pull (on oars) Pa 219*; *pa* **haled** pulled G 1338; took a pull (of liquor) C 1520; **hales in** comes straight in G 136, **haled out** went straight out G 458; **haled on** pushed on, hurried on C 380; **hales upon hyght** soars high C 458, **haled upon loft** towered G 788; **haled to him** drew (their bows) in his direction G 1455; *pa ppl* **were haled** had been withdrawn G 1049*; **wel-haled** well drawn up G 157

half, halve *n, adj* and *adv* half Pe 72, G 140, 165, 185; part Pa 460*, G 649; side C 719, Pa 434, G 698, 1224, 1552; **(up)on Godes halve** on God's behalf, for God's sake C 896, G 326, 692, 2119, 2149; **upon ayther half, upon bothe halve** on each side Pa 450, G 2070, 2165, **on uch a halve** all around G 742; **by half** by a long way G 1543; *pl* **half** C 950 sides, **halves** halves G 1613, areas C 1039

halkes *n pl* nooks, recesses C 104, 321

halle *n* main dining and concourse area of a great house or royal court Pe 184, C 90&, Pa 272, G 62&; **in ~** G 102, 495; ~ **dor** hall door C 44, G 136, 458, ~ **yates** gates to the hall G 1693, ~ **flor** floor of the hall C 1397; *pl* **halles** large public rooms G 48, 2329, larger rooms C 321

halme *n* shaft, handle G 218, 330, 2224

halowes pres cries 'halloo!' G 1908; *pa pl* **halowed** hallooed G 1445, 1914; *pa ppl* shouted at G 1723*; *vn* **halowyng** hallooing G 1602, 1639

halse *n* neck G 427, 621, 1353, 1388

halt *adj* lame C 102

halte see **holde** (1)

halve see **half**

halwed *pa* hallowed, consecrated C 506, 1163

halwes *n pl* saints G 2122

halydam *n* holy relics G 2123*

halyday *n* holy day, liturgical feast day, religious festival C 135*, 141, 166, *Pa* 9*, festival period G 804; *pl* **halydayes** holy days, holidays G 1049

hame *n* (northern variant of 'home'; used for rhyme) G 1534, 2451

hampred *pa* put into crates C 1284*

hand(e), **honde** *n* (*pl* **hande** *Pe* 49, 218, G 494, **handes** *Pe* 706 +) hand(s) C 1106 +; side G 2146; **on honde** in hand, for present attention *Pe* 155*; **in hande** in His power C 1704, in (their/his) hands C 1412, 1510, G 375, 1586, into (his) hands; **in my hande** in my power *Pa* 222, G 1257, **in thy ~** C 734; **holden ... in her ~** hold by the hand G 2056*; **tan on ~** taken up G 490; **out of ~** without to-do G 2285

hand-mighte *n* power of (His) hands *Pa* 257

hand-werk *n* handwork, product of the skill of the hands *Pa* 496*

hand-while *n* short space of time, moment C 1786

hanselle *n* (New Year's) gift as token or earnest of good luck G 66*, 491*

hap *n* good fortune *Pe* 16, 713, 1195, *Pa* 212, G 48; *pl* **happes** blessings, blessed states C 24, *Pa* 11, 29

hapenes *pres* fares C 27

happe *v* wrap G 1224*; *imp* **under ... hem happe** cover them with C 626; *pa* **happed** was enwrapped, clothed himself G 864; *pa ppl* **happed** wound, bound G 655; closed *Pa* 450

happen *adj* blessed *Pa* 138; *super* **hapnest** most blessed, most fortunate G 56

happes see **hap**

hard(e) *adj* hard C 524, 1209, 1342, G 732; difficult C 663, taxing C 442, G 733; grievous C 562, 1150; stern, merciless C 714, *comp* **harder** C 50; *as n* what is hard (*Pe* 606); *adv* hard C 44, 159, G 2153, firmly G 1783, *comp* **harder** G 655; fast C 1204; badly, ill C 424; severely C 543; without mitigation or mercy C 596

hardenes *pres* urges on G 521*; *pa* **hardened** G 1428

hard-hewen *part adj* masonried G 789

hardily *adv* boldly, without doubt *Pe* 3; assuredly *Pe* 695, G 2390

harlot *n* low fellow, vagabond, menial C 39, 148; *gen* **harlotes** knave's, low fellow's C 34, ~ **speche** lewd words C 874; *pl* **harlotes** scoundrels, reprobates C 860, (*abusive*) 1584

harlottrye *n* obscene behaviour C 579

harme (1) *n* harm C 168; suffering, injury *Pa* 520, G 2277; wound,

damage *G* 2511; wrong, sin *Pe* 681, *Pa* 17, wrong suffered *G* 2390;
pl **harmes** harms *G* 2272, griefs *Pe* 388
harme (2) *v* do harm to *C* 1503
harmles *adj* sinless, guiltless, innocent *Pe* 676*, 725
harnays *n* equipment, set of armour *G* 590, 2016
harnayst *pa ppl* accoutred, armed *G* 592
harpe *n* harp, harp-playing *Pe* 881
harpen *pres pl* harp *Pe* 881
harpores *n pl* harpers, harp-players *Pe* 881
hasel *n* hazel bush *G* 744
haspe *n* hasp, clasp *G* 1233; **haspe-stede** place where cloak is fastened *Pa* 189*
haspes *pres* clasps *G* 1388; *pa ppl* **hasped** fastened *Pa* 381, *G* 607; enlocked; buckled (*in armour*) *G* 281, 590, 831; **hasped on** attached to *C* 419
haste *n* haste *C* 419, 902, *Pa* 217, *G* 1569, 1756; angry precipitateness *C* 1503*; **in** ~ soon *G* 780, 2218, with angry precipitateness *C* 599
hasted *pa pl* hastened on *C* 937, drove on *G* 1897; hastened *G* 1165, 1424
hastily *adv* quickly *G* 1135, promptly *G* 605, precipitately *C* 200*
hasty *adj* hasty (of temper), hot-tempered *Pa* 520; urgent *G* 1051*
hat see **hatte**
hate (1) *n* hate, hostility *Pe* 453, *C* 714, 915
hate (2) see **hot(e)**
hatel *adj* cruel, fierce, violent *C* 227, *Pa* 367, 481; **for** ~ because of angry hostility *C* 200
hathel *n* man, person *Pe* 676 +; attendant *G* 2065; (*in address*) *G* 323, 379, 2467; *pl* **hatheles** employed men *Pa* 217, *G* 829&
hatte (1) *n* hat *G* 2081; **hard hattes** helmets *C* 1209
hatte (2) *v* (see **hete** (2)) be called, be named *C* 1571*; *pres* 1&3s **hat(te)**, 2s **hattes** is/am/are called *C* 448 +; *pa ppl* **hatte** called, named *C* 1322
hatter *comp adv* more hotly *C* 1138
hattes see **hatte**
hauberghe *n* metal corslet *G* 203, 268
hauekes see **hawk**
haunte *pres pl* habitually practice, exercise *Pa* 15
haves *pres* 2s hast *C* 171, *pl* **haven** have *G* 1255
hailounes *pres* runs a crooked course *G* 1708*
hawer *adj* goodly, fine *G* 1738; *comp* **hawerer** *G* 352
hawerly *adv* fitly, with suitable refinement or finery *C* 18, 1707*
hawk *n* hawk *Pe* 184; *pl* **hauekes** *C* 537
hawthorne *n* hawthorn bush *G* 744
hay (1) *n* hay-grass (growing or cut) *C* 1684*

hay (2) *inter* (*hunting cry*) hay! G 1158, 1445
haylse *v* greet, salute G 2493; *pres* **haylses** G 972; *pa and pa ppl*
haylsed hailed, greeted Pe 238, C 612, 814, 1621, G 223, 810, 829
hayre *n* hair Pe 210, G 180, 183, 190, 436, 1587; *haircloth* Pa 381; *pl*
hayres hairs C 1695; *haircloths* Pa 373
hed(e), heved *n* (*pl* **hedes**) head(s) Pe 459 +; *top or operative end of*
a weapon G 210, 217, *arrowhead(s)* G 1162, 1459; *leader* G 253;
source (of river) Pe 974; *headland* G 700*; **to hed** for (her) head Pe
209; **of your hed** from your mouth G 1523
hede *v* heed, observe, look at Pe 1051
hedles *adj* without a head G 438
hef see **heve(n)**
hegges *n pl* hedges G 1708
helde (1) *adv* **as ~** very probably Pe 1193; *comp* **the helder** the more,
the sooner G 376, 430
helde(n) (2) *v* fall, issue G 1523; *pres* **heldes** bows, stoops, sinks C
1330; *as generalized verb of motion* **heldes him** makes his way G
221; **heldes hem with** accompanies them C 678; *pres pl* **helden to**
make for G 1922; **helden after** follow G 1694; *pres ppl* **heldande**
bowing G 972, 1104; *pa* **helded** went C 39; *went down* G 1321,
sank; **helded unhole** became unsound C 1681; **helded ... fro**
stepped back from G 2331; *pa ppl* **helde** poured C 1520
helde (3) see **holde** (2)
hele (1) *n* health, well-being, safety Pe 16, 713, C 920, 1099, Pa 92,
335
hele (2) *n* ~ **over hed** head over heels Pa 271; *pl* **heles** C 1789, G
777, 1899, 2062, 2153
heled *pa* healed C 1098
helle *n* Hell Pe 442, 651, 840, 1125, C 168, 227, 577, 911, 968;
(*personified*) C 961; *emphatic* **as helle** 'like Hell' Pa 275; *gen* **helle** Pe
643
helle-hole *n* pit of Hell C 223
hellene *adj* of Hell Pa 306
helme *n* helmet G 203&
help(e), helpen *v* help C 762, Pa 219, 222, 496, 501; *pres* **helpes** G
2209, *subj* **help(e)** G 256, 1055; *pa* **help** C 1163
hem *pron* (*acc and dat of 'they'*) (to) them Pe 69 +
heme *adj* ?snug-fitting G 157; *adv* **hemely** ?snugly G 1852
hemme *n* edge, border Pe 1001; *border of a garment* Pe 217; *pl*
hemmes hems G 854
hemself, hemselven *adj and pron* themselves C 15 +; *non-refl pron in*
oblique case them G 976, 1085
hence *adv* from here C 944, Pa 204
hende *adj* courteous, gracious, worthy C 612 +; 'at hand', obedient Pe

184*; (*of things or actions*) fine, graceful, elegant C 1101, G 108; *as n* courteous man/men G 827, 896*, 904, 946, 1104, (*in address*) gracious one Pe 909, G 1252, 1813, sir G 2330; gracefulness, graceful things C 1083; *super* **hendest** most attentive to courtesy and decorum G 26

hendelayk *n* courtesy, gracious manners C 860, G 1228

hendely, **hendly** *adv* courteously G 773, 829, 895, 2408, graciously, gracefully G 1228, 1639

henge *v* hang, be suspended C 1734, G 478; put to death on the gallows C 1584; *pres* **henges** hangs G 1614, falls G 182; *imp* **heng up** G 477*; *pa* **hanged** hung G 117, 732, 983, 1345, 1357, 1930

hent(e) *v* (*pres* **hentes**, *pl* **hent**; *pa and pa ppl* **hent**) seize(s) C 1209, Pa 251, take G 827, took, seized C 376 +; receive(d) Pe 388, Pa 178, G 2277, 2323, 2484; *subj* receive, come by Pe 388, C 151; (*figuratively*) embrace Pe 669; takes hold of Pa 189, G 605; get hold of, obtain Pe 1195; overtook C 1150; took captive C 1179; **hentes hem** take up C 710; **hent of** took off G 983

hepe *n* heap Pa 380; **on a ~ en masse** C 1211; in a heap Pa 149; *pl* **hepes** heaps, numbers C 1775; (**up**)**on hepes** in a confused heap G 1590, 1722, into piles C 912

her *poss adj* (1) her Pe 4*, 163 +; (2) their Pe 92 +

herande see **here** (2)

herber (1) *n* shelter, lodging, hostelry G 755, 812

herber (2) *v* take lodging or shelter G 805; *pa* **herbered** G 2481

herde see **here** (2)

here (1) *n* army, band of fighting men G 59, 2271; followers, household C 902; troop, company C 409

here (2) *v* hear Pa 327 +; ~ **and see** to hear and see Pe 96; *pres* **heres** Pa 123; *pres ppl* **herande** in the hearing of G 450*; *pa and pa ppl* **herde** heard Pe 873 +, ~ **tale/carp of** heard any mention of G 704, 1057

here (3) *v* praise, compliment G 1634; *pa* **hered** praised C 1527

hereafter *adv* in future C 291

here-biforne *adv* in times past G 2527

here-biside *adv* near here C 926

hered *pa* (*of 'herien'*) honoured, did reverence to C 1086

hereinne *adv* herein, in this place Pe 261, 577, Pa 364; in this matter G 300, in these circumstances C 1595; in this garment C 147*

heres see **here** (2)

here-utter *adv* outside of this place C 927

herken *v* listen to, hear C 980, 1369, G 1529; *pres* **herk(e)nes** G 592, 1708; *pa and pa ppl* **herk(e)ned** C 193, G 775, 1274; *imp* **herk** hear (me), listen Pa 431; **herken tithynges** search for information C 458

herle *n* strand, thread G 190

hernes *n pl* eagles C 537; cf. **erne-hued**

herre see **high(e)** (1)

hert(e) *n* heart, mind *Pe* 17 +; (*as organ*) *G* 1594; courage *G* 2296, 2301; confidence *G* 2438; *pl* **hertes** hearts, minds C 516, *Pa* 2

herttes *n pl* harts, male red deer C 391, 535, *G* 1154

Hervest *n* the season in which crops are ripe and ready for harvesting C 523, *G* 521*

heryes *pres* plunders, ravages C 1294; *pa and pa ppl* **heryed (up)** ravaged, plundered C 1179, 1786*; dragged, pulled C 883*, *Pa* 178

hest(e) *n* command *Pe* 633, C 94, *G* 1039, 1092, *pl* **hestes** commands C 341; **holde the/this hest** keep the/this promise C 1636, *G* 1090

hete (1) *n* heat *Pe* 554, 643, C 524, 604, *Pa* 477

hete (2) *v* (a) promise, assure *Pe* 402, *G* 2121; *pres* **hetes** promises, vows C 1346; *pa and pa ppl* **hyght(e)** (2s **hettes** *G* 448) promised *Pe* 305 +, vowed C 714; (b) 2s *pres* **hetes** command *Pa* 336; see also **hyght(e)** (3) and **hatte** (2) and cf. **hetes**

heter *adj* painful, harsh *Pa* 373

heterly *adv* fiercely *Pe* 402, *Pa* 477, 481, *G* 1587; violently, roughly C 1222; forcefully, sharply *G* 1152, 2291, 2311; quickly C 380; fervently, urgently *Pa* 381; eagerly, energetically *G* 1446, 2317; grievously *G* 1462

hetes *n pl* promises *G* 1525; cf. **hete** (2)

hethe *n* heathland, moorland C 535, *G* 1320, 1879

hethen *adv* hence, from here *Pe* 231, *G* 1794

hethyng *n* contempt C 710; mistreatment, abuse *Pa* 2, C 579

hettes see **hete** (2)

heved see **hed(e)**

heve(n) *v* increase *Pe* 16; **wordes ... ~** utter speech *Pe* 314; *pres* 2s **heve** raise *Pe* 473, 3s **heves** lifts *G* 1184, 2288, *pl* **heven** lift *G* 1346, **hef** pull, haul (at the oars) *Pa* 219*; *pa* **hef** rose *Pa* 477, swelled *G* 120; raised *G* 826, 1587; *pa ppl* **hoven** raised, set up C 206, 1451, lifted, raised C 413, **has ~ thy hert** have raised yourself in spirit (in self-glorification) C 1711

heven *n* sky *Pe* 988 +; heaven *Pe* 473 +; *pl* **hevens** the realm of heaven (the plural form imitates Vulgate *caeli*) *Pe* 423, 441, 620, 735; (*oath*) **by heven** *G* 323; *gen* **heven wrake** vengeance of the heavens *Pa* 185

hevened *pa and pa ppl* set up C 24, 1714; raised C 506, 920; *G* 349; ~ **of** extricated from C 1601

heven-glem *n* gleam of light in the sky C 946*

heven-kyng *n* king of heaven, God C 1628, *Pa* 257

heven-quene *n* queen of heaven *G* 647

hevenryche *n* the kingdom of heaven *Pe* 719, *Pa* 14, 28, *G* 2423

hevy *adj* heavy *G* 289; woeful, burdened with care or grief *Pe* 1180,

Pa 2, *G* 496

hewe *v* cut *G* 1351; *pres* **hewes**, *pl* **hewen ... of** cut(s) off *G* 1346, 1353, 1607; *pa ppl* **hewen** hewn, cleaved *G* 477; cut and shaped *G* 789; wrought *G* 211

hid see **hyde**

hider *adv* hither, to this place *Pe* 249 +

hidor *n* dread, horror *Pa* 367

high(e) (1) *adj* high *Pe* 678, 1024, *Pa* 257, *G* 723, 742, 794; tall *G* 137, 281, 2197; great *Pe* 1051 +; full *C* 604; in authority *G* 812; lofty *C* 1391; (*of sound*) loud *G* 1165, 1602, so as to be publicly heard *C* 1564; (*of liturgical season or service*) solemn, major *Pe* 39, *G* 932, 1033, 1963, full, formal *Pa* 9; ~ **horses** fine horses *G* 1138*; ~ **hedes** antlered heads *G* 1154*; ~ **wede** armour *G* 831; ~ **elde** full maturity *G* 844*; ~ **gate** main road *Pe* 395; ~ **auter** great or main altar *G* 593; ~ **pryde** *Pe* 400*; ~ **dese/table** the crossing table (dais) at the head of the side tables at public meals *C* 115, *G* 108, 222, 250, 2462; **on** ~ (high) up *Pa* 463, *C* 413, *G* 1607*, 2442, loudly *G* 67, 1602; **upon** ~ above *G* 2057, to a high degree *G* 48; *comp* **herre** taller *G* 333; *super* **highest(e)** highest *C* 406, 451, greatest *G* 57; highest in status *C* 1749; as *n* **the high(e)** high ground *C* 391, *G* 1152, 1169, 2004, **the ~ and the lowe** those of all ranks *G* 302, **in ~ and in lowe** in all matters *G* 1040; **the Highest** God *C* 1653; cf. **hyght(e)**

high(e) (2) *adv* high *Pe* 207 +; loudly *C* 1206, 1783, *G* 307, 1445, publicly *G* 349, 468, 2212; intensely, vigorously *G* 1417; ~ **out of age** far beyond reproductive age *C* 656; *super* **highest** in the place of honour at table *G* 1001

High-Kyng *n* king of kings, God *Pe* 596, *C* 50, *G* 1038, 1963*

highliche *adj* noteworthy, impressive *G* 183

highly *adv* ceremoniously *G* 983, in due form *G* 755*; high (up) *C* 920, 1527, devoutly *C* 745*, *G* 773*, very much *G* 949, 1547, 1587, 1828

highly *adv* highly, well *G* 1612

hil-coppe *n* hilltop *Pe* 791

hille *n* hill, mountain *Pe* 678 +; raised site for castle headquarters *G* 59*; *pl* **hilles** hills *G* 742, 956, mountains *Pa* 463, *C* 380, 447; **by hille ne by vale** anywhere *G* 2271

himself, himselve(n) *adj* himself *C* 23 +; *pron nom* he himself *Pe* 680, 1134, *C* 584, *G* 2109; *non-refl pron in oblique case* him *Pe* 896 +

hindes *n pl* hinds, female red deer *G* 1158, 1320

hit (1) *pron* it *Pe* 10 +; *gen* **hit** its *Pe* 108 +, **his** *Pe* 460; **hit are** they are *Pe* 895, 1199, *C* 869, *Pa* 38, 40, 69, there are *G* 280, 1251, ~ **were(n)** they were *C* 253, 379, 657, 795

hit (2) see **hitte**

himself, hitselven *pron* itself *Pe* 446, *C* 281, *G* 1847

hitte *v* hit *G* 2296; *pres* **hittes** happens *Pe* 132; arrives *C* 479; *pa pl* **hitten** *G* 1455, *pa s* and *pa ppl* **hit(te)** hit, struck *G* 1459, 1594, 2153, 2287; proceeded in a direction so as to make contact with something: **hit to** arrived at *Pa* 289; **hit to the erthe** struck the ground *G* 427; **hit in** dropped into *Pa* 380

ho *pron* she *Pe* 129 +

ho-bestes *n pl* she-animals, female animals *C* 337

hode (1) *n* hood *C* 34, *G* 155, 881, 983, 1930

hode (2) *n* rank, profession *G* 297

hodles *adj* hoodless, bare-headed *C* 643

holde (1) *n* possession, keeping, control *C* 1597, *G* 1252*; stronghold, castle *G* 771; **halte** forcible detention *Pe* 1158*

holde (2) *v* (*pres* **holde(s)**, *pl* **holden**; *imp* **holde** *C* 335, *G* 2297; *pres ppl* **haldande** (holding *Pa* 251); *pa* **helde**; *pa ppl* **holden**) hold(s) *Pe* 454, 490, *G* 436&, keep(s) *C* 335, 652 *Pa* 25, *G* 698, 1043, 1970, **holden utter** kept out *C* 42, **holden in** denied egress *G* 1158, **holde aloft** keep up; contain *G* 124; consider(s), considered *Pe* 301 +; consider as, judge *C* 1062; restrain *Pa* 321; possess(es) *C* 35, 652, *Pa* 14, **hold of** possess property in subordination to *C* 1162; rules, presides over *C* 1349, *G* 53, 904, 2057; (*of space*) occupied *Pe* 1002, 1029, *C* 1387; proceeds, **holdes out** goes out *Pa* 434; preserve, protect *G* 2297; observe(d) (a promise) *C* 1636, *Pa* 333, *G* 1090, 1970, 2213, 2348, *pa subj* 2129; observe(d), keep to *C* 315, *G* 1677, held by *C* 244, **hold good** observe faithfully *Pa* 336; obliged, beholden *G* 1828, **holden thereto** beholden to do *G* 1040; **helde him** stayed, remained, **holden me there** remained within those limits *Pe* 1191

holde(ly) *adv* faithfully *G* 2129, carefully *G* 2016, securely *G* 1875, 2221

hole (1) *n* hole *G* 1338; pit *Pa* 306; opening *G* 2180; hollow in a hill or cliff *G* 1569

hole (2) *adj* whole, pure *Pe* 406; entire, perfect *G* 1338, 1346, 1613; sound of limb *C* 102, undiseased *C* 594; healed *G* 2390, 2484, without defect *G* 2296

hole-foted *adj* web-footed *C* 538

holkked *pa* dug *C* 1222*

holly *adv* wholly *Pe* 418, *C* 104, 1140, *G* 1049, 1257

holsumly *adv* healthfully, restoratively *G* 1731

holt *n* woodland *G* 1677; *pl* **holtes** groves *Pe* 921, *G* 1320; **holt side** edge of a grove *G* 1697

holtwodes *n pl* woodland trees *Pe* 76; forests *G* 742

holwe *adj* hollow *G* 2182, sunken *C* 1695

homered *pa* gave a hammer-blow *G* 2311

homly *adj* belonging to a particular household, domestic; ~ **hyne** household servants *Pe* 1211

honde see **hand(e)**

hondel *v* wield (a weapon) *G* 289; *pres* **hondeles** touches with thoughtfulness or curiosity *G* 570; *pres pl* **hondel** handle *C* 11; *pa* **hondeled** handled, fingered *G* 1633, 2505

hondelyng *vn* handling, touching, use of the hands *C* 1101; *adverbial gen* **hondelynges** by the use of the hands *Pe* 681*

hone *v* dwell, be situated *Pe* 921

honest(e) *adj* righteous *C* 14, *C* 594; decorous, seemly *C* 18; respectable *C* 166; decent, suitable *C* 638; belonging to the category of animals classed as 'clean' in the Old Testament *C* 505

honestly *adv* honourably, decorously *C* 135, without dishonour *C* 1083, without sin *C* 705

honour (1) *n* honour *Pe* 475, 852, 864, honour-worthiness *G* 1228, 1806, honourable conduct *G* 1963, 2056; status *C* 35; reverence *Pe* 424; *pl* **honoures** marks of honour *G* 1813

honour(e) (2) *v* show honour to *C* 1714, *G* 830, 1033; *pres* **honoures** bestows honour upon *C* 594; *pa and pa ppl* **honoured** honoured *G* 2520, revered *G* 2412, worshipped, paid reverence *C* 1340, *G* 593*, respectfully treated *G* 949

hope (1) *n* hope *Pe* 860; idea, thought *C* 1653; expectation, anticipation *C* 714

hope (2) *v* think, be of the opinion that, suppose, assume *Pe* 225, *Pa* 212, *G* 140, 352, 395, 926, 2301; *2&3s and pl pres* **hopes** *C* 148, 663, *Pa* 123 thinks; *pa* **hoped** *Pe* 139, 142, 185, *C* 1681 thought; hope(d) *Pa* 315, *C* 860; **hoped of** expected *G* 2308

hore *adj* grey; shade-casting *G* 743*

hortyng *vn* hurting, harming *C* 740

horwed *part adj* defiled, ceremonially unclean *C* 335*

hostel *n* place offering shelter or accommodation, residence *G* 253*, 805; **bone** ~ good hostelry *G* 776

hot(e) (**hate** *Pe* 388) *adj* hot *C* 626, keen *C* 1195; intense, searing *Pe* 388, *C* 1602; angry *C* 200, *Pa* 481; *adv* **hote** hotly *C* 707; **in hot and colde** through thick and thin *G* 1844

houndes *n pl* dogs *C* 961, *G* 1139&

houre *n* hour *Pe* 530, 551, *C* 1779, *Pa* 498; *pl* **houres** *Pe* 555

hourle *n* water-surge *Pa* 319*; cf. **hurles**

hoven see **heve**

hoves *pres* pauses, rests *C* 485; is situated *C* 927; *pa* **hoved** paused, remained stationary *G* 785, 2168

hoves *n pl* hooves *G* 459

howso *adv* howsoever, in whatever manner *C* 1753, *G* 1662*

hue (1) *n* loud cry *Pe* 873

hue (2) *n* colour *Pe* 842, 896*, *G* 147, 157*, 234, 1471; form *C* 1707*; *pl* **hues** colours *Pe* 90, *C* 1119, 1483, *G* 867, 1738, 1761, *singular sense at line ending* 620, 707

hued *part adj* coloured *C* 1045, *G* 845

huge *adj and adv* of great size *G* 743, 844, 1633, 2047, 2081; exceeding(ly), enormous(ly) *C* 4, 1311, 1659, *Pa* 264, 420, *G* 788, 1436, 1820, 2420

hungeres *pres pl* ~ **after** hunger for *Pa* 19

hunt *n* huntsman *G* 1417, 1422, 1701; *pl* **hundes** huntsmen *G* 1147, 1428, 1604, 1910

hunteres *n pl* huntsmen, participants in a hunt *G* 1165, 1428, 1697; hunting-dogs *G* 1144*

huntyng *vn* (the act of) hunting *G* 1102

hurkeles *pres* crouches, adopts a hunched posture *C* 150*; *pa* **hirkled** sat *C* 406

hurles *pres pl* hurtle *C* 1204; *pres ppl* **hurlande** hurling, rushing *C* 413, 1211, hurtling *Pa* 273; *pa and pa ppl* **hurled** crashed *Pa* 149, dragged *C* 44, ~ **in(to)** hurtled into *C* 223, 376, 874; cf. **hourle**

hurrok *n* bottom of boat, bilge *C* 419, *Pa* 185*

hurt *v* inflict injury *G* 2291; *pres* **hurtes** injures *G* 1452, 1462; *pa and pa ppl* **hurt** injured *G* 1577, 2311, afflicted *C* 1195

hyule *n* mound, hillock *Pe* 41, 1172, 1205

hyde *n* skin *Pe* 1136, *G* 2312; animal's hide *C* 630, *G* 1332

hyde(n) *v* hide *C* 682, *G* 2511, *refl* *C* 915; provide shelter for *Pa* 479; *pa* **hid** *G* 1875; *pa ppl* **hid** hidden *C* 430, *Pa* 325; unknown *C* 1600; as *n* hidden thing *C* 1628

hye (1) *n* haste; **in** ~ at once, immediately *G* 245

hye (2) *v* ~ **me** hasten *G* 2121; *imp* **hye** run, hasten *C* 33, make haste, hurry up *G* 291; *pres* **hyes** *C* 538, 610, 1762, *G* 521, 1462, *pl* **hyes** *G* 1351; *pa* **hyed** hastened *C* 392, 623, *Pa* 217, *G* 826, 1152, 1910; hastened (something or someone) on *C* 1584*

hyghe *inter* (hunting cry) hi! *G* 1445

hyght(e) (1) *n* height *Pe* 1031, *C* 317, *G* 788; **in the ~ of** in the high degree of *Pa* 398; **on ~** up *G* 421, on high, above *Pe* 501; (**high**) **upon ~** high *C* 458, rising tall *G* 332, to a high degree *Pa* 219, *G* 48; cf. **high(e)**

hyght(e) (2) see **hete** (2)(a)

hyght(e) (3) *pres s and pl* (of **hete** (2)) is/are named *Pe* 950, 999

hyghtled *pa* arrayed, embellished *C* 1290

hyne *n pl* (agricultural) labourers *Pe* 501, 632; servants collectively (of a particular household) *Pe* 1211; (*disparaging*) varlets *C* 822

hypped *pa* sprang *G* 1459, 2232

hyre (1) *n* wages, pay *Pe* 523&, *Pa* 56

hyre (2) *v* hire, employ; ~ ... **to** hire for *Pe* 507; *pa subj* **hyred** *Pe* 560

hyrne *n* corner *Pa* 178, 289; *pl* **hynes** furthest corners *C* 1294*
hyve *n* bee hive *C* 223

ibrad see **brede** (4)

ichose see **chose**

idolatrye *n* worship of man-made images *C* 1173

ile *n* distinct realm, domain *Pe* 693; *pl* **iles** islands *G* 698; **west ile** western world, western realms *G* 7

ilk(e) *adj* same *Pe* 704+; *as n* **this** ~ *Pa* 414, **that** ~ this/that same thing *G* 1385, 1981, **those** ~ those persons *C* 930; **with that** ~ at that juncture *C* 511*; **of that** ~ matching in colour or material *G* 173, 1930, cf. **of the same**

ille (1) *n* harm, evil; *pl* **illes** evils *C* 577; **tas to non ille** do not be offended *C* 735, *G* 1811

ille (2) *adj* bad, unpleasant *Pa* 8; wrongful *C* 272, *Pa* 203, unbecoming *C* 864

ille (3) *adv* not at all well *Pe* 1153, 1177, *C* 73, 693, 1141, *G* 346; wrongly *Pe* 681; horribly *C* 955

ilyche *adv* alike, equally *C* 228, *Pa* 161, **inlyche** *Pe* 546, 603; **ever** ~ completely *C* 1386, continuously *Pa* 369, *G* 44, **aye** ~ without pause *C* 975; cf. **aliche**

inmong(es) *prep* among *C* 278, in among *C* 1485

in-myddde(s) *prep and adv* amid *C* 1677; in-mingled *G* 167; in the middle of *Pe* 222, 740, 834, *G* 1932; in the course of *C* 125; in between, in the middle *G* 167

inne *prep* (*emphatic variant of 'in'; used at line ending*) *C* 1092, *Pa* 146, 318, *G* 2196, 2440, 2509

innocence *n* freedom from guilt or sin (especially of young children) *Pe* 672*, 708

innocent *adj* free from sin *Pe* 666; *as n* one free from sin (especially one below the age at which sin can be imputed) *Pe* 625*, 684, 696, 720

innome see **nyme**

inobedyent *adj* disobedient *C* 237

inogh(e), inow(e) *adj and adv* enough, sufficient(ly) *Pe* 612+; many *C* 116+; very *Pe* 636, *G* 514, 803, 888; plentiful(ly) *Pe* 649, *G* 219, 1401; widely, well *Pe* 637, *C* 297; *n* plenty, a great deal *Pe* 625; many men *G* 826*; *inter* enough! no more! *C* 669, *G* 1948

instrumentes *n pl* musical instruments *C* 1081

inwith *prep* within *G* 1055; *adv* from the inside *Pe* 970; on the inside *C* 14, *G* 2182

ire *n* (God's) wrath *C* 572, 775, 1503; fierceness *C* 1240

irked *impers v* it became irksome or wearisome to *G* 1573

iwyssse *inter and adv* indeed, in truth *Pe* 151+

ieye *n* eye *Pe* 302+; *pl* **iyen** *Pe* 183+, **ene** *Pe* 200
ieye-lyddes *n pl* eyelids *G* 446, 1201; cf. **liddes**

jacynght *n* jacinth *Pe* 1014

janglande *pres ppl* grumbling *Pa* 90, 433

jape *n* jest, joke, trick; **did ... such** ~ pulled such a trick *Pa* 57; *pl* **japes** jests *G* 1957; jocular or jesting remarks *G* 542; lewdness *C* 272*; tricks, behaviour *C* 864, practices *C* 877

javeles *n pl* idle, ignorant fellows *C* 1495

jeauntes *n pl* giants *C* 272

jolily *adv* energetically, with a will *G* 42

joly, **jolyf** *adj* pleasing, beautiful *Pe* 842, 929; goodly, nice, amiable *C* 300, 864; energetic, lusty, frisky *G* 86*; joyful *Pa* 241

joparde *n* danger, hazard, uncertainty *G* 97, 1856; **of ... lys no** ~ there is no issue to be decided as between *Pe* 602*

journay *n* day's travel *Pa* 355

joyles *adj* joyless, unhappy *Pe* 252, *Pa* 1146, 433, *G* 542

joyne *v* encounter, meet *G* 97; ~ **to** be adjoined to *C* 726; *pa* and *pa ppl* **joyned** added *Pe* 1009; assembled together *C* 434; **yet joyned** also added *Pe* 1009

joyned *pa* and *pa ppl* (of 'joyne' [*enjoin*]) appointed *C* 877; ~ **was** was appointed as *C* 1235, *Pa* 62

joynt *adv* altogether; **ful** ~ without intermission *Pa* 355*

joyntes *n pl* joints *C* 1540

joyst see **justed**

Jue *proper n* Jew *Pa* 109, 182, 245; *pl* **Jues** *Pe* 804, *C* 1236, 1612

juel(e), **juelle** *n* jewel, gem *Pe* 23, 249, 253, *G* 1856*; specially valued person or thing(s) *Pe* 277*, 278, 795, 1124; *as collective n* jewels *Pe* 929; *pl* **jueles** valuable objects, treasures *C* 1441*, 1495

jueler *n* jeweller *Pe* 252, 264&, 730, 734

juelrye *n* jewel work, precious ornaments *C* 1309*

Jues see **Jue**

jugge *v* judge *Pa* 413, adjudge, sentence *Pa* 224; *pa* **jugged** appraised *Pe* 7*; put on trial *Pe* 804; *pa ppl* **jugged** sentenced *Pa* 245, adjudged, ordained *G* 1856

judgement *n* judgement, sentence *C* 726

juis *n* sentence, doom *C* 726, *Pa* 224

Juise *n* the Jews collectively, Jewry *C* 1159

justed *pa* jousted *G* 42; *pa ppl* **joyst** closely united *C* 434*

justise *n* judge, arbiter *C* 877

justised *pa* ruled over, held authority over *C* 1170

justifyet *pa ppl* vindicated, proved to be just *Pe* 700

justyng *vn* jousting, joust *G* 97

Juyn *adj* of the Jews, Jewish *C* 1170

kakes *n* pl cakes of bread C 625, 635

kark *n* distress, difficulty, hardship C 4, Pa 265

kayre(n) *v* go G 1048, 1670 (*refl* C 945*), traverse Pe 1031; **kayre at the kart** do work associated with the cart (loading, helping to push free, etc) C 1259; *pres* **kayres** G 734; *imp* **kayre** C 901, *pl* **kayres** G 2120; *pa* **kayred** went C 85, turned G 43; *pa ppl* **kayred** brought, taken C 1478, 1765*

kayser *n* supreme head C 1322, 1593; *pl* **kayseres** rulers C 1374

kene *adj* sharp Pe 40, C 1253, 1697; fierce G 2406, warlike, fearless C 1339, G 321; redoubtable C 1374, 1593; powerful, destructive C 839; skilful, able G 482; *super* **kennest** most able C 1575

kenely *adv* sharply G 2001; urgently C 945, G 1048

kenne (1) *v* know, understand; hear Pa 357; teach C 865; *pres* **kennes** teaches G 1484; makes known; *pa* **kende**, **kenned** taught, showed Pe 55, C 697, G 1489; knew, recognized; **kenned himselfen** remembered who he was, 'came to himself' C 1702

kenne (2) *v* (*aphetic form of 'bikenne'*: see **bikennes**) commend G 2067, *pres pl* **kennen** G 2472

kennest see **kene**

kepe *v* (*pres* **kepes**, *subj* **kepe** G 293; *pa* **keped**, **kepte**; *pa ppl* **keppte**) cares for, cares about C 234, 508; *in negative constructions* + *inf* care(d), mind(ed), want(ed) Pa 464, G 546, 2142; guards, defends G 1059*, 2148, protect(ed) C 1229, *subj* G 2298, looked after G 2016; govern, keep in check C 292*; keeps up, engages in G 1688; received C 89; meet G 307*; awaited G 1312; obeyed C 979, ~ **to** observe, conform to C 264; ~ ... **with carp** respond with speech G 307*; *imp* **kepe thee ... that** conduct yourself in such a way that G 372*

kerre *n* low marshy ground G 1421*, 1431, 1434

kerve *v* cut, slice C 1104, 1108; *pres* **kerves** cuts, cleaves C 1547, rends, tears C 1582; *pres pl* **kerven** prune Pe 512; *pa* **carf** crafted, fashioned Pa 131; *pa pl and pa ppl* **corven** cut Pe 40, Pa 153; carved C 1382; modelled C 1407, 1452, chiselled G 797; cf. **kyrf**

kest(en) see **cast**

keve *v* sink Pe 320; *pa ppl* **keved** alighted, set down Pe 981

kever *v* recover, restore C 1700; succeed in, manage G 750, 804, 2298; acquire, get Pa 223, G 1221, 1254; ~ **to** arrive at Pe 319, make (your) way to; *pres* **keveres** brings, affords G 1539; makes his way G 2221; *pa* **kevered** recovered G 1755, ~ ... **of** recovered, delivered or rescued from C 1605; **I kevered me** I managed to get for myself Pa 485

klubbe *n* club, cudgel C 1348*; *pl* **klubbes** C 839

knarre *n* crag G 1434; *pl* **knarres** G 721*, 2166

knaves *gen* (of 'knavē') low-ranking menial's C 801*; *pl* **knaves** wretches, rascals C 855

knew(e) *v* (*northern variant of know(e)*) G 1645

knowlach *n* **come to** ~ recovered his reason C 1702

knawyng *vn* knowledge, perception, awareness *Pe* 859

kne *n* knee C 40; *pl* **knes** knees C 1541, G 577, 818

kneles *pres* kneels C 1345, 1591; *pres ppl* **knelande** kneeling *Pe* 434; *pa* **kneled** knelt G 368, 818, 2072

knewe(n) see **know(e)**

knit *pa* (*pa pl* **knit(ten)**, *pa ppl* **knit**) (*of covenants*) concluded C 564, G 1642*; fastened G 1331, 1831; ~ ... **thereinne** inherent in it G 1849

knokke *n* blow G 2379

knokkes *pres* pounds C 1348, *2s* **cnokes** strike G 414*, *pl* **knoken** knock *Pe* 727

knot(te) *n* knot G 194, 630, 662, 2376, 2487; united group *Pe* 788; protuberance, mound G 1431, 1434; *pl* **knottes** knots G 188, clasps, (ornamental) fastenings G 577

know(e) (**knew(e)** G 1645) *v* (*pres* 2&3s **knows**, *pl* **knowe(n)**, **knowes**; *pa* **knew**, *subj* **knewe** G 1849; *pa pl* **knewe(n)**; *pa ppl* **knowen**) know(s), knew, known *Pe* 410 +; acknowledge(d), recognize(d) *Pe* 541, C 231, *Pa* 519, G 348, 633; (socially) acknowledges as a friend, behaves so as to show or seek fellowship G 937*; learned about C 61; known as, reputed C 1575, G 1511

knyf, knyve *n* knife C 1104, G 1331, 2042; *pl* **knyves** G 1337

knyghtly *adv* in such a manner as becomes a knight G 974

knyghtly *adj* knightly G 1511

kok *n* cock G 1412, 2008

koynt see **quoynt(e)**

Krystyin *adj and n* Christian *Pe* 461, 1202

kuy *n pl* kine, cows C 1259

kyd see **kythe**

kyllen *pres pl* kill C 1267*; **kylle of** strike off C 876; *pa ppl* **kylled** killed C 1252, G 2111

kyn *n* kind, sort, manner *Pe* 794; followed by *n* manner of, sort(s) of *Pe* 619, 755, 771, C 100, 1483, G 890; *pl* **all kynnes** all the different sorts of *Pe* 1028, all kinds of C 303, G 1886; **by no kynnes wayes** by no manner of way *Pa* 346; cf. **anyskynnes**

kynde (1) *n* nature *Pe* 535 +; species C 334, 505, 507, G 261; kindred, descendants G 5; inherent property C 1128; *pl* **kyndes** species C 336, 1483

kynde (2) *adj* natural C 697, appropriate G 473; grateful, thankful *Pe* 276*

kyndely, kyndly *adv* (a) with kindness, in a kind manner *Pe* 369; (b)

appropriately, correctly, properly C 1, 319, G 135
kyndom *n* kingdom *Pe* 445, C 161, 1700, 1731
kyng(e) *n* king *Pe* 448 +; *gen* **kynges** king's C 1221, G 100&; *pl* **kynges** kings C 1170, 1374, 1510, G 25
kynned *pa ppl* having been conceived C 1072
kynnes see **kyn**
kyrf *n* cut, slash G 372; cf. **kerve**
kyrk(e) *n* church *Pe* 1061, C 1270, 1431, G 2196
kyrtel *n* tunic-like garment (usually worn under a gown or mantle) *Pe* 203, G 1831
kyssse *v* kiss G 1303, 1501, 1555; *pres* **kysses** G 605&, *pl* **kyssen** G 2472; *imp pl* **kyssse** G 1794; *pa 2s* **kyssedes** G 2351, *3s* **kyssed** G 1758, 1796, *pl* **kysten** G 596, 1118, *pa ppl* **kyst** G 1869; cf. **cosse**
kyssyng *vn* (act or practice of) kissing G 1489, 1979
kyst *n* chest, coffer, casket *Pe* 271; (*used of*) ark C 346, 449, 478, **chyst** 464*; *pl* **kystes** C 1438, *Pa* 159
kyth *n* homeland, native country *Pa* 462; nation *Pa* 377; land C 901, 912, 1110, 1201, 1305, G 460, region C 571, G 2120; **out of** ~ from anywhere C 1316; *pl* **kythes** lands, regions C 414, 1231, *Pe* 1198; *Pa* 18; *gen pl* **kythyne** of regional communities C 1366
kythe *v* make known C 1435, show, reveal *Pe* 356; acknowledge C 1368; *imp pl* **kythes** show *Pe* 369; *pa* **kythed** spoke of C 851; *pa and pa ppl* **kyd** made known, showed/shown C 23, 208, *Pa* 118, G 263; shown (a kind of behaviour), acted towards G 234, 775, 2340; *part adj* renowned, illustrious G 51, 1520
lace *n* cord, band G 217, 2226; belt G 1830, 1851, 2030, 2226*, 2487, 2497, 2505
lach(e) *v* (*pres* **laches**, *pl* **lachen**; *subj* **lache** C 166; *imp* **lach(e)**; *pa* **laght(e)**, *pl* **leghten**; *pa ppl* **laght**, **lached**) take(s)/took, receive(d), come/came by *Pe* 1205 +; seized *Pa* 266; conceived *Pe* 1128; takes hold of G 936, 1029, 1131, 1906; **laght to** took hold of G 433; **lach out** take away *Pa* 425; **laght fro** removed from G 156; **laches** (**lachen**, **leghten**) **leve** take(s)/took leave G 595, 1027, 1410, 1870*
lacet *n* fastening G 591*
lad(de) see **lede** (2)
ladde *n* employed male, 'hand' *Pa* 154; low fellow C 36
laddres *n pl* (siege-)ladders C 1777
lade *pa ppl* (*of* 'lade') laden, filled to abundance *Pe* 1146
lady *n* mistress *Pe* 453, G 346, 1218, **my Lady** the Virgin Mary C 1084; mistress of the house G 933, 941, 1187, 1472, 1657, *gen* **ladies** lady's 2030; woman of aristocratic status *Pe* 491, C 1059, G 947&, (*in address*) G 1810; *pl* **ladies** C 1352*, 1370, 1375, 1434, G

49&, 950&

ladyly *adj* pertaining to a noblewoman, aristocratic *Pe* 774

ladyschyp *n* status of a noblewoman *Pe* 578

laft(e), laften see **leve** (4)

laghe *v* laugh *G* 472; *pres* **laghes** *C* 661, *G* 316, 1479; *pres pl* **laghe(n)** *G* 464, 2514; *pres ppl* **laghande** laughing *G* 988, 1068, 1207, 1212, smiling *G* 1757; *pa* **laghed(e), loghe** laughed *C* 653, 668, 670, *G* 909, 1079, 1290, 1623*, 2389, grinned *Pa* 461, *pl* **laghed** laughed *G* 69, 1113, 1398, 1554, **loghen** *C* 495

laght(e) see **lach(e)**

laghter *n* laugh *G* 1217*

laghyng *vn* laughing, laughter *G* 1954

lake *n* body of water *C* 1023; (*used of the Flood*) *C* 438

lake-ryftes *n pl* clefts forming pits used by den-living animals *C* 536*; see also **rayn-ryfte**

lakked *pa* dispraised, found fault with *G* 1250; scorned *C* 723; *impers* was wanting *G* 2366

laled(e) *pa* called, cried out *C* 153, 913

lambe (*Pe* 1046*), **lamp** *n* lamp *G* 2010, lights of a lamp *C* 1273; *pl* **lampes** oil-lamps *C* 1485

langour *n* sickness, affliction, suffering *Pe* 357

lante(s) see **lene**

lantyrne *n* lamp, lantern *Pe* 1047

lappe *n* (*pl* **lappes**) fold of fabric hanging from sleeve *G* 936, *pl* *Pe* 201*; folds of deer's flesh *G* 1350

lappes *pres* enwraps, embraces *G* 973; *pa and pa ppl* **lapped** entwined, wound *G* 217; wrapped, enfolded, clad *C* 175, *G* 575

large *adj* ample *Pe* 609; extensive *C* 438, 1658; large *C* 1549, 1773; long *Pe* 201, *G* 210, 2225; wide *C* 1386; *as n* width, breadth *C* 314

largesse *n* largeness *G* 1627; giving freely *G* 2381

lasched *pa* flashed, blazed *C* 707

lassen *v* lessen, diminish *G* 1800; *pa* **lasned** abated, lessened *C* 438, 441

last(e) (1) *adj and n* last *Pe* 547 +; **at the** ~ (**upon** ~ *Pa* 194, **by the** ~ *C* 1327) in the end *C* 888 +, lastly *G* 2497, finally *C* 1096

laste (2) *pa ppl* fully laden, fraught *Pe* 1146*

laste (3) *v* last *C* 894, continue *Pe* 956, *subj* *C* 1594, live *G* 1061, 2510; *pres s and pl* **lastes** last(s) *C* 1124, *G* 1235, endure(s) *Pe* 1198, *C* 561; *pa* **last(e)(d)** lasted (in time) *C* 1298, *G* 805, 1665, extended (in space) *C* 227, *G* 193

lastes *n pl* vices, defects *C* 1141, *Pa* 198

late *adj and adv* late in the day *Pe* 392, 538, 574, 615, *C* 1804, *G* 1027; reluctant *Pa* 419; unzealous *C* 1172; *comp adv* **never the**

later none the less *C* 1352, none the less readily *G* 541

lathe *pres pl* urge C 900; *imp pl* **lathes** invite C 81; *pa and pa ppl* **lathed** invited C 163, 809, G 2403; urged C 936

launce (1) *n* lance G 667, 2066, 2197

launce (2) *v* charge, gallop G 1175, *pres* **launces** G 1464, *pa* **launched** G 1561

launces *n pl* branches *Pe* 978, C 1485*

launde *n* open space of ground, field, plain C 1000, 1207, G 765, 1894, 2146, 2154, 2171, 2333

lause(n) *v* (*pres* **lauses**, *pl* **lause(n)**, *pa* **laused**) loosen G 1343, 1350, 1784; open, unlock C 1428; unties G 2376; loosen themselves, become detached C 966, G 526*; gave way C 957; remove, dispel C 1589; utter(ed) C 668, *Pa* 489, G 1212, 1766, 2124, *imp* *Pa* 350; *vn* **lausyng** unfastening G 1334

lave *v* bail out (water) *Pa* 154; *pres* **laves** pours out *Pe* 607; *pres ppl* **lavande** streaming, swelling C 366

lawe *n* raised piece of ground, mound C 992, G 765, 2171, 2175

law(e) *n* law C 263, *Pa* 259, legal formality G 1643; religious creed C 723, 1167, 1174, 1307, *Pa* 405; system, manner G 790; *pl* **lawes** laws, commandments *Pe* 285; legal claims, titles C 188

laweles *adj* not observing the moral code of any religion *Pa* 170

lay see **lye**

lay(e) *v* lay low, bring down C 1650; put C 425, set G 96, *imp* *lay* C 1025; *pres* **lays up** puts away G 1874; *pres pl* set *Pa* 173, cast *Pa* 174; *pa* **layd** (G 419, 1480), *pl* **layden** (*Pa* 106*) laid; *refl* **layd him doun** lay down G 1190; **layd him biside** parried G 1777*; *pa ppl* **layd(e)** felled C 1307; laid (in a grave) *Pe* 958, 1172; lying G 156; laid, set *Pa* 37, disposed *Pa* 168; imposed, laid down C 263

layk *n* (*pl* **laykes**) (pattern of) action, behaviour C 1053, 1064; practice, exercise *Pa* 401, G 1513; actions C 274; recreational activity/activities, games, sport(s) G 262, 1023, 1125; amusements, entertainments C 122

layke *v* indulge in play, game or sport G 1111; *pres* **laykes** G 1178; *imp pl* **laykes** play, sport C 872; *pa* **layked** amused himself/themselves G 1554, 1560

laykyng *vn* playing, performance G 472

layne *v* conceal G 1863, 2124, 2128, *imp pl* 1786; *pa ppl* **layned** concealed, hidden *Pe* 244

layte *v* look for, seek *Pa* 180, G 411, 449; 2&3s *pres* **laytes** *Pa* 201, 277, G 355; *imp pl* **laytes** C 97; *pa ppl* **layted** kept watch upon, watched for (an opportunity to trap) C 1768

layth *adj* (Norse-derived cognate of **lodly**) foul *Pa* 401

lazares *n pl* diseased people C 1093

leaute *n* loyalty, faithfulness, good faith C 1172, G 2366, 2381

lebardes *n pl* leopards C 536

lecherye *n* sensuality, lasciviousness C 1350

led *n* lead C 1025

ledden *n* voice, words, song *Pe* 878

lede (1) man *Pa* 347 +; (*used of God*) C 1093, *Pa* 281; servant C 614, G 851, 1119; group of people, community C 691, 772; feudal community, liegemen G 833, 1113, 1124; (*in address*) *Pe* 542, G 258*, 449, 675, 1675; *gen* **ledes** man's G 2499; *pl* **ledes** men C 1193 +; people C 993; subjects, liegemen G 679, 849, servants G 1989

lede (2) *v* lead G 849; engage in, ply *Pa* 428; **lif ... ~ live** G 2058; *adj* + **lif ... ~ lead** a (certain kind of) life *Pe* 392, 409, 774; *pres* **ledes** G 936, *pl* **leden** G 977; *pres ppl* **ledande** engaging in G 1894; *pa and pa ppl* **lad(de)** led *Pe* 801, G 947, 1729, 1989; **ladde much joye** made very merry G 1927

ledeles *adj* without attendants G 693*

leder *n* lord, leader G 679; *pl* **lederes** leaders, officials C 1307

ledische *adj* ~ **lord(es)** lord(s) of particular people(s) C 73, 1375; **what ~ lore ne langage** what people's script or language C 1556

lee *n* (place that provides) shelter, protection *Pa* 277; stronghold G 849, 1893

lef (1) *n* leaf *Pe* 77, foliage *Pa* 447; *pl* **leves** leaves C 488, 605, 609, 1464, 1485, *Pa* 453, 466, 475, G 526; pages *Pe* 837, C 966; cf. **leved**

lef (2) *adj* (*inflected form: leve*) dear *Pe* 266, C 772, G 1133, 1924, 2054; welcome, pleasing G 909, 1111, 1719*; *as n* dear one, beloved; **His ~** (anyone who is) beloved by Him *Pe* 418, His dear one C 1066, **his ~** his wife C 939; *comp* **lever** dearer, preferable G 1251, *as n* someone dearer G 1782; *super* **levest** most pleasing G 49; most precious G 1802

lefly *adj* dear, beloved C 977

lefsel *n* leaf-hall, bower *Pa* 448

lege *n* feudal superior, liege-lord C 1368; *adj* owing or entitled to (feudal) allegiance to; **that he was ~ tille** to which he owed allegiance C 1174; ~ **heste** command from a liege-lord C 94; ~ **lord/lady** overlord/mistress to whom allegiance is due *Pa* 51, G 346, 545*

legg *n* leg *Pe* 459; *pl* **legges** G 575, 2228

leghten see **lach(e)**

legioun *n* legion, regiment C 1773; *pl* **legiounes** *Pe* 1121, C 1295

leke see **loukes**

lel(e) *adj* loyal, faithful, pious C 1069, G 1513, 1516; reliable, sound, authentic C 425, G 35

lelly *adv* loyally, faithfully *Pe* 305, C 1066, G 449, 1863, 2124, 2128

lemande *pres ppl* flaming, shining G 1119; *pa* **lemed** flamed, shone *Pe*

- 1043, C 1273, 1486, G 1137, 1180, 2010, 2226, ~ **of** shone with *Pe* 119, G 591
- lemman** *n* beloved, lover *Pe* 763, 796, 805, 829, sweetheart, mistress C 1352*, G 1782, *pl* **lemmanes** C 1370
- lende** *imp* remain, stay G 1100*; reside G 1499; *pa ppl* **lent** placed C 256, 1084, *Pa* 260, G 1002; come, arrived *Pa* 201; stayed, resided G 2440; **lent on** engaged in G 1319*
- lene** *imp* grant, give *Pa* 347; *pa 2s* **lantes** C 348, *3s* **lante** G 2250
- lened** *pa* ~ **him** sat C 784; ~ **with the nek** leaned his neck forward G 2255; **to ...** ~ leaned upon G 2332
- leng(e)** *v* (*pres* **lenges**, *pl* **leng**; *pa* **lenged**, *pl* **lenged(e)**, *pa ppl* **lenged**) linger, stay, remain(ed) *Pe* 261 +; stay(s) (as guest) C 81, 614 (*imp*), 800, 803, *Pa* 42, G 254, 1068, 1672, 2446, detained as guest G 1684; stayed put C 497; resides, resided, lived C 772, 891, 960, *Pa* 366, G 2446; were placed C 1419; ceased moving about *Pa* 281
- lenger**, **lengest** see **long(e)**
- lenghe** *n* length *Pe* 416; (*with* 'look') **on lenghe/lenthe** for a long time *Pe* 167, G 232
- lent** see **lende**
- lenthe** *n* length *Pe* 1031 +, duration C 568; **into ~ of dayes** for ever C 1594*; **forty dayes** ~ for forty days C 224; (*with* 'look') **on lenthe/lenghe** for a long time *Pe* 167, G 232, some way away G 1231; **spere** ~ spear's length C 1383, G 2316
- lepe** *v subj* **lepe** let him run G 292; *pres* **lepes** runs, darts G 328, 1709*, leaps, jumps G 981, 2154; springs C 966; *pres pl* **lepes** (C 1209), **lepen** (G 1131) leap; *pa* **lep** ran *Pa* 154, 179; *pa ppl* **was lopen** had leapt G 1413, **were** ~ had run C 990
- lepre** *adj* afflicted with leprosy C 1094
- lere** *n* complexion, face *Pe* 210*, 398, C 1687, G 318, 943, 2051, 2228
- lere(n)** *v* teach C 843, G 1878*
- lerne** *v* learn, discover G 918, 927; ~ **at** learn from G 1532; *pa* **lerned** was informed, heard G 908; *pa ppl* **lerned** expert, skilled G 1170; learned C 693, mastered G 2447
- lesande** *pres ppl* loosening; unclosing, unsealing *Pe* 829; cf. **lause**
- les(e)** *adj* untrue, false *Pe* 865*; empty, fictive C 1719, mendacious, lying *Pa* 428
- lese** *v* lose G 2142; *pa and pa ppl* **lest** lost *Pe* 9, lost from sight *Pa* 88; failed C 887; **lestes** (thou) lostest *Pe* 269; *pa ppl* **lorne** lost, destroyed C 932; cf. **lose(n)**
- lesse** *comp adj* (also used as *n*) and *adv* lesser, less *Pe* 491 +; ~ **ne more** to a greater or smaller degree, in any way G 1524; **the** ~ lesser because of that *Pe* 852&, C 215, G 87, 2368, any lesser for any consideration *Pe* 900; *super* **lest** least G 355, 591

lest (1) see **lesse**

lest (2), **lestes** see **lese**

lesyng *n* lie, untruth *Pe* 897

let(e) *v* behave *G* 1206; allow *C* 732, *G* 1063; *imp* **let** let, allow *Pe* 718, 901, 912, 964, *C* 1434, *G* 360, 1893; *imp pl* **letes** let *G* 2387, **let see** let it be seen *G* 299*, 414, **let we hit one** let us say no more about it *C* 670, **let(es) ... one** leave alone *C* 872, *G* 2118, **let(tes) be** cease *G* 1840, desist *Pe* 715; *pres* **letes** lets, **he ~ me alone** he will leave me alone *Pa* 88; *pa pl* **letten the renk one** left the man alone *Pa* 216; *pa* **let** (a) allowed, let *Pe* 20, 813, *G* 248, 420, 423; let fall *G* 817, 2309; let out, uttered *G* 1086*; (b) considered, rated *C* 1174, 1320; intended, desired *G* 1733; (c) caused *G* 1084; (d) acted as if, behaved *G* 1634, **let as** behaved as if *G* 1281, pretended *G* 1190*, 1201, 2257

lethe (1) *n* assuagement, relief *Pa* 160

lethe (2) *v* ease, assuage *Pa* 3; abate, bring down *G* 2438; set free, spare *C* 752; die out *C* 648; *pres lethes* is eased *Pe* 377; cf. **lythe**

lether *n* leather *C* 1581; stomach-lining of deer *G* 1360

lette *v* hinder *G* 2142, 2303; *pa lette* impeded *Pe* 1050, **letted of that** prevented from doing that *G* 1672; *pa ppl of ... letted* barred from, deprived of *C* 1803

letten see **let(e)**

letter *n* lettering *C* 1580; *pl lettres* letters *C* 1536, 1549, 1565, 1634, written words, writing *C* 1561, 1596, *G* 35

letrure *n* learning, scholarship *Pe* 751; learning or doctrine embodied in writing *G* 1513

leve (1) *n* leave, permission *Pe* 316, *G* 133, 971; permission to depart *G* 545*, 1288, 1670, 1960 or move *G* 1218; departure *C* 401, *G* 595&; *inter (polite) with thy/your* ~ if you would permit me/us to speak *C* 94, 347, 715

leve (2) see **lef**

leve (3) *v* allow, grant *G* 98

leve (4) *v* leave, desist from *Pa* 403, *C* 1233; decline to take *G* 1502*; *pres leves* leaves, parts from *C* 1678, *G* 1583, 1870, 2154; *pres pl leven* desist from *Pa* 401; **leves** leave *C* 378; *pa and pa ppl laft(e)* left *C* 1004; bequeathed *C* 1337; relinquished *G* 369; left behind *G* 2030; *pa pl laften* departed from *Pe* 622; desisted from *Pa* 405

leve(n) (5) *v* believe *Pe* 69 +; *pres 2&3s leves* *Pe* 302, 304, 308, *pl leven on* believe in *Pe* 425; *subj lest ... thou leve* lest you should believe *Pe* 865; *imp leve thou* believe *C* 1493; *pa leved* *C* 1703, *Pa* 405

leved *pa ppl* endowed with leaves, leafy *Pe* 978; cf. **lef** (1)

lever, levest see **lef** (2)

leves see **lef** (1), **leve** (4)

lewed *adj* lay, unlettered *C* 1580, ignorant *C* 1596, *G* 1528

leyen see **lye** (2)

liddes *n pl* eyelids *G* 2007; cf. **iye-lyddes**

lif (*inflected forms lyve, lyves*) *n* life *Pe* 1078 +, *pl lyves* lives *G* 1516, 2112; soul *Pe* 305*, 687*; condition of life *Pe* 247, 392, 409, manner of living *Pe* 774, *C* 1658, conduct of life *G* 675, 1878*; living being *Pa* 260, creature *G* 1780; *gen lyves* life's, of life *Pe* 578, 908; **(up)on lyve** alive, living *Pa* 293, *C* 356, *G* 385, 2054, 2095, anywhere, ever *Pa* 51, *G* 1187*, 1717, 1786; **in thy lyve** in your lifetime *C* 173; **his lyve** (*C* 1321), **his lyves long** (*Pe* 477) all his life

liflode *n* means of sustaining life, sustenance, food *C* 561, *G* 133

lik *v* lick *C* 1000, taste *G* 968; *pres pl likkes* lick *C* 1141*; *pa likked* imbibed *C* 1521*

like (a) *impers* v please C 1064; *pres* **likes** C 1726, Pa 397, G 1234; *subj* **like** C 717, Pa 42; *pa* **liked** (it) pleased G 87, 976; **me** (**him**, **hem**, **yow**, **us**, **thee**) **likes/liked** (it) please(s)/pleased me (him, them, you, us, thee) Pe 566 +; **liked ... ille** it displeased G 346; (b) *personal* v likes, liked C 36, Pa 47, G 694, 1281*, 1682, 2134, like(s), be/was pleased C 36, 73, was well pleased G 893, chose C 411, 435

lithernes *n* (see **luther**) *adj* hideousness, horribleness G 1627

livres *n pl* garments worn as livery Pe 1108

lo *inter* see! Pe 693 +; *followed by direct object* Pa 349

lode *n* load, baggage; mental or physical circumstances Pa 156, G 1284; **on** ~ in her leading and care G 969, in my leading or governing care Pa 505

lodesmon *n* pilot, navigator C 424, Pa 179

lodly see **lothelyche**

lof *n* praise; **of** ~ of value, estimable Pa 448

lofden see **lovv**

loft(e) *n* height; upstairs room G 1096, 1676; **up(on)** ~ aloft, on high C 206, 808, 1273, in the sky C 947, in(to) heaven C 692, 1803, up(wards) C 1004, 1342, G 788, 2261, at/to the top C 318, 1407, Pa 449, on the surface C 1025, aloud, loudly C 1210, Pa 237, elevated (in status) C 1649; **upon** ~ **wonnen** succeeded in reaching the top C 1777

loge *n* dwelling place C 800; bower constructed of leaves and branches Pa 457*, 461; *pl* **logges** buildings C 1407; **loge dor** *n* house door C 784

logge v find lodging, take shelter C 807*

logges see **loge**

logging *n* house C 887

logh *n* body of water Pe 119, C 366, 441, 1031, Pa 230

loghe, **loghen** see **laghe**

loke (1) *n* look, glance G 1480, 2438; *pl* **lokes** manner of looking, expression, demeanour Pe 1134

loke (2) v look, see Pe 934 + (*subj* Pe 710, *imp* Pe 463, C 1069, G 448, *imp pl* C 903; *pres ppl* **lokande** looking Pa 458; *pa* **loked** Pe 1145 +); watch over G 2239, **loked hem** looked after them Pa 504; **loke if** see if C 691; **lokes to** looks towards C 401; **loke to** take heed to C 263, 1059, **lokes him aboute** attends to matters C 817; **loke ye** make sure to C 905, 944, ~ **even that** make quite sure that C 317; *imp pl* **lokes** take care that C 905; *pa* appeared G 199*, behaved G 970; **loked how** looked and saw how C 269, 495, ~ **to** (Pe 167), **loke(d) on** (C 1580, G 1063) looked upon; **loked ... brode** opened the eyes wide G 446

loken see **loukes**

lokkes *n pl* locks, hair *G* 156, 419, 2228

lokyng *vn* act of looking *G* 232, gaze *Pe* 1049

loltrande *pres ppl* sprawling *Pa* 458

lome (1) *n* tool, weapon *G* 2309; container, (sea-)vessel *C* 314*, 412, 443, 495, *Pa* 160

lome (2) *adj* lame, disabled *C* 1094

lomerande *pres ppl* ?groping, ?stumbling *C* 1094

londe *n* land, territory *Pe* 148, *G* 411, 1055, 1133, 1319, 2440, 2445; kingdom *Pe* 937, *C* 909, 932, 1797, *Pa* 201; dry land *C* 308, *Pa* 288, 322, shore *Pa* 237; world *C* 308, 568; **in** ~ in his lands *C* 122, *G* 679, in this land *G* 36, in that place *G* 486, in the world *G* 1802; **upon** ~ on earth *G* 2058; *pl* **londes** lands, regions *C* 1293, 1768, pieces of landed estate, fields, etc *G* 1561

longande see **longes**

long(e) *adj and adv* long *Pe* 477 +; **this dayes** ~ all this day *Pe* 533, **his lyves** ~ all his life *Pe* 477; **the ~ day/night** for the whole day/night long *Pe* 597, *C* 807; **for ~ yore** for a very long time *Pe* 586; **upon** ~ after a long time *C* 1193; *comp* **lenger** longer *Pe* 168, 977, *C* 810, 982, *Pa* 428, *G* 1043, 2063, 2303, **ever the** ~ in progressive proportion *Pe* 180, 600; *super* **longest** longest *C* 256

longed *pa* (of *impers v* 'long' [to afflict with longing]) **me** ~ I longed *Pe* 144

longes *pres* is proper to *G* 2381; *pres ppl* **longande ... to** belonging, pertaining *Pe* 462; *pa* **longed to** belonged to *G* 2515, pertained to, related to *C* 1090, *G* 1524; were politically under the authority of *C* 1747

longing *n* grief or anxiety for (the fate of) a loved one *Pe* 244*, 1180, *C* 779, 1003, *G* 540

lopen see **lepe**

lord(e) *n* (heavenly or earthly) lord *Pe* 108 +; husband *Pe* 403*, *C* 656, *G* 1231, 1271, 1534, 1863; *gen* **lordes** lord's, of the lord *C* 1797; *inter* *Pe* 108, 1149, 1199, *Pa* 264; (*in address*) *C* 94, 2505, to *God* *C* 612 +; *pl* **lordes** lords, leaders *C* 1375; great ones, magnates *C* 1375, 1521, *G* 49, 595, 1115, 1229, 2515

lordeschyp *n* territory over which a lord governs *C* 1658, *G* 849

lore *n* learning *G* 665; script *C* 1556*; **in wommon** ~ in woman's propriety *Pe* 236; **my/thy** ~ my/thy teachings *Pa* 350, 428

lorne see **lese**

los *n* reputation, fame *G* 258, 1528

lose(n) *v* lose *Pe* 265, *Pa* 364; perish, be lost *Pe* 908; ruin, destroy *Pa* 198; *pres* **loses** loses, suffers the loss of *C* 1141, *pl* **losen** will destroy *C* 909; *pa ppl* **lost** (**losed** *C* 586) lost *Pe* 1092, *C* 1797, *Pa* 515, *G* 69, destroyed *C* 909, *Pa* 198, *G* 675; cf. **lese**

losse *n* loss *Pa* 174; loss of happiness, reversal of fortune *C* 1589, *G*

losyng *n* state of being lost C 1031*

losynger *n* deceiver, sneak Pa 170

lote (1) *n* expression, demeanour, (tone of) voice Pe 238; cry Pe 876, G 1623; shriek (of winds) Pa 161; sound G 119, 1917, 2211; speech Pe 896*, G 639, words C 668; *pl* **lotes** words G 244, 988, 1954, conversation Pa 47, G 1116, 1399; cries G 1086*; **flod lotes** noise of the sea Pa 183

lote (2) *n* lot Pa 194, lot-casting Pa 180; allotted destiny: **this ~ I laght** this befell me Pe 1205; *pl* **lotes** objects used in lot-casting Pa 173

lothe (1) *n* harm, pain Pe 377, 2507; reluctance G 127

lothe (2) *adj* **thoght ... ~** were reluctant G 1578

lothelyche, lodly *adj* loathsome, disgusting C 1350, Pa 230; detestable C 274; *as n* abhorrent persons C 1093; *adv* **lodly** with loathing, with abhorrence C 1090, G 1634; in an ugly way, unpleasantly G 1772

loud(e) *adj* loud C 1207, G 64, 909; *adv* **loude** loudly Pa 195 +

loue *v* recommend Pa 173; *pres* **loues** allows, grants the validity of Pe 302, 308; cf. **alow**

loukes *pres* locks, entwines G 628; keeps closed G 2007; *pres ppl* **loukande togeder** closing up, shrinking C 441; *pa* **louked, leke** came together, was fastened G 217, 1830, formed an enclosure G 792, locked, enclosed Pe 210*; *pa ppl* **loken** enclosed Pa 350, G 765, embedded G 35, tied G 2487

loupe *n* tie, cord G 591; windowed embrasure G 792

loute (1) *pres pl* lie quietly, remain, rest Pe 933

loute (2) *v* bend, bow (to) G 248; *pres* **loutes** bows C 798, bends G 1306, 1504; makes his way G 833, 933*; *pa* **lut(te)** bent, bowed G 418, 2236, 2255; made his way G 971*

love (1) see **luf** and **lovy**

love (2), **love** *v* praise, honour Pe 285, 342, 1124, 1127, C 1289, G 1256; admire G 1399; *pres ppl* **lovande** praising, glorifying C 1719; *pa and pa ppl* **loved** praised G 1281*, glorified C 497, 925, 987, 1703; worshipped Pa 168; cf. **lovyng**

love-chere *n* loving expression C 28*

lovely (1), **luflych(e)** *adj* lovely, goodly, fair Pe 693 +; fine G 792; nice, likeable G 1469, 1657; warm, friendly C 809, G 1480; *comp* **loveloker** lovelier Pe 148; *as n* G 973; *super* **lovelokkest** (G 52), **loveliest** (G 1187) loveliest

lovely (2), **luflyly, luflyche** *adv* delightfully, beautifully Pe 880, 978; fairly, neatly G 1606; duly, fairly, without mishap G 1583, 2176; charmingly G 1206; in a manner showing good will, amicably, with friendliness C 81, 163, G 254, 369, 595, 981, 1306, 1410, 1757,

2389, 2514, graciously G 1002

loves *n pl* (palms of) hands C 987*

lovy, **love** *v* (*pres 2s loves*, *3s loves*; *pa and pa ppl loved*; *pa pl loved*, **lofden**) love(s), loved C 21&, G 702&; woo, court *Pa* 30; love(d), like(d) C 823 (*pres pl loves*), G 87, 126; was/were disposed (to) G 21

lovyng *vn* (act of) praising, worship C 1438, *Pa* 237; cf. **love** (2)

lowande *pres ppl* shining, glowing G 679, 868

lowe (1) see **love** (2)

low(e) (2) *adj* low G 1170, 1761, low-lying C 1761, G 1170; *as n* G 302, 1040; *adv* low *Pe* 236, 547, C 798, G 972, 2236; **on** ~ downstairs G 1373

lowed *pa ppl* lowered, brought low C 1650

lowly *adv* deferentially, humbly C 614, G 851, 1960

luchen *pres pl* throw, pitch *Pa* 230*

luf *n* love *Pe* 467 +; affection, regard G 1810, 1927; advances G 2497; pleasure, happiness G 1086, 1893, 1927, 2054; loved one C 401, *pl love* 1419; **for luf of** G 540, **for thy** ~ G 1802 on your/(his) account, for your/(his) sake; *pl lufes* conjurations that begin 'for the love of' G 1786

luf-daungere *n* frustration in love *Pe* 11*

luf-lace *n* belt given as a token of love G 1874, 2438

luf-laghyng *vn* laughing gallantries G 1777

luf-longing *n* love-yearning *Pe* 1152

luf-lowe *n* flame of love C 707

luflych(e) see **lovely** (1), **lovely** (2)

luflyly see **lovely** (2)

lufsum *adj that* ~ that lovely creature *Pe* 398, G 1814

luf-talkyng *n pl* pleasing talk G 927*

lulted *pa ppl* raised (a sound), sounded C 1207*

luly-white *adj as n tho* ~ those lily-white (= lovely) maidens C 977*

lumpen see **lympes**

lur *n* loss G 355; perdition, destruction G 1284; harm, evil *Pa* 419, G 1682; *pl lures* losses, harms *Pe* 339, 358

lurkkes *pres* remains or lies under cover *Pa* 277, G 1180*; *pa lurked* proceeded under cover, went under shelter *Pe* 978; *pa ppl lurked* stayed under the bed-covers G 1195

lusty *adj* warm-blooded, full of life C 981

luther *n and adj* evil, wicked(ness) *Pe* 567*, *Pa* 198; unpleasant, grievous *Pa* 156; unwholesomeness C 1090; **the** ~ the base ones C 163; *adv likes thee so* ~ pleases you so ill *Pa* 500; **lutherly** badly, poorly C 36; cf. **lithernes**

lut(te) see **loute** (2)

lye (1) *n make a* ~ utter a falsehood *Pe* 304

- lye** (2) *v* lodge, reside, pass the night(s) *Pe* 930*; be or stay in bed *G* 88, 1096, *imp* 1676; *pres lys*, *pl lye* lies *Pe* 602, *Pa* 458, *G* 1469, 1686, is/are placed *G* 1780; **lys in Him** lies in His power *Pe* 360; *pa lay* (*Pe* 214 +), *pl leyen* (*C* 936) lay; resided *G* 37; *pa ppl leyen* lain *C* 1003; (*line-ending forms*) *pres 3s lygges* (*C* 1126, 1792, *G* 1179), *pl lygges* (*C* 99), *pa lyggede* (*Pa* 184) lie(s), lay
- lyft** (1) *n* sky, firmament, heavens *C* 212, 366, 435, 1356, 1448, 1493, 1761, *G* 1256
- lyft(e)** (2) *adj* left *C* 981*, 1581, *Pa* 515, *G* 698, 947, 2146, 2487
- lyft(e)** (3) *v* institute *C* 717; elevate in status *C* 1649; *pres lyftes* lifts *G* 2309; produces *C* 586; **lyftes up** erects *G* 12; *pres pl lyften* rise *G* 505; *pres ppl lyftande* rearing upwards *C* 443; *pa and pa ppl lyft(e), lyft up* raised (up) *C* 1407*, 1777, *G* 258, 369*, 433, 446, turned *Pe* 567
- lygges, lyggede** (*line-ending forms*) see **lye** (2)
- lyght(e)** (1) *n* light, radiance, brilliance *Pe* 69, 119, 1043, 1073; (source(s) of) illumination *C* 1272, 1486, torchlight *G* 992, 1885, 1989, morning *G* 1675; **lyves** ~ spark of life *C* 648
- lyght** (2) *adj* bright, radiant *Pe* 500, 1046, *G* 199; clear, pure *Pe* 682; untroubled, serene, good-humoured *Pe* 238*; happy *C* 987, cheerful *G* 1119*; active, swift *G* 87, 1464; light in weight *C* 1126; **set at** ~ put small value on *G* 1250; *comp lyghtloker* less difficult *Pa* 47
- lyght** (3) *adv* lightly *Pe* 214; **let ~ by, let of ...** ~ put little value on, esteemed lightly *C* 1174, 1320
- lyght(e)** (4) *v* (*pres lyghtes*, *pl lyghten*, *pa lyght(e)*, *pa ppl lyght*) alight(ed), descend(ed) *Pe* 943, 988, *C* 476, 691, 1069, *G* 822, 1373, 2220; dismount(s), dismounted *G* 329, 1175, 1583, 1906, 1924, 2176, *imp* 254; pause from travel (at) *C* 800; fall, fell *C* 213, 235, *G* 423, 526; pause *C* 800; placed, set down *Pe* 247
- lyghten** *v* decrease the weight of *Pa* 160
- lyghtloker** see **lyght** (2)
- lyghtly** (1) *adj* made of soft material, fabric *G* 608, 1830*
- lyghtly** (2) *adv* quickly, promptly *C* 817, 853, *Pa* 179, *G* 292, 328, 1131; easily *Pe* 358, *Pa* 288, *G* 423*, 1299, 2309; quite possibly *Pa* 88
- lykker** *comp* more consonant with *Pa* 493; *super lykkest* most like *C* 261
- lykkerwys** *adj* delicious, delightful *G* 968*
- lyknes** *pres* is like, resembles *C* 1064; compares, likens: **lyknes hit to** applies it to *Pe* 500*
- lyknyng** *vn* resemblance *Pa* 30
- lykores** *n pl* liquids, drinks *C* 1521
- lykyng** *n pl* pleasure, delight *Pe* 247, *C* 239; will, desire *C* 172; *pl lykynges* *C* 1803

lym *n* body part, member *Pe* 462; *pl* **lymmes** limbs, members *Pe* 464, *C* 175, *G* 868; legs *G* 139, 1332

lympes *pres* befalls *Pa* 174; *subj* **lymp** *G* 1109; *pa* **lymped on** fell upon *Pa* 194, **him** ~ happened to him *Pa* 265, befell him *G* 907; *pa ppl* **lumpen** befallen *C* 424, 1320, *Pa* 520

lynde *n* tree *G* 526, 2176; **lyndewodes** of the wood *G* 1178*

lyndes *n pl* lower or lumbar portion of the torso *G* 139

lyne (1) *n* line *G* 628; **by** ~ straight away *Pe* 626

lyne (2), **lynne** *adj* linen *Pe* 731, *G* 1814*

lyounes *n pl* lions *C* 536

lyppe *n* lip *G* 2306; *pl* **lyppes** *G* 962, 1207

lyre *n* flesh *G* 418

lys see **lye** (2)

lyst (1) *n* art, skill, trick *C* 693

lyst (2) *n* desire *Pe* 173, *C* 843; joy, pleasure *Pe* 467, 908

lyst(e) (a) *impers v* **me/her/thee/yow** ~ it pleases me/her/you *C* 872, 1766, *Pa* 42, *G* 1111, 1502, 1784, *subj* 2133, 2142; *pa* **lyste** it pleased *G* 941, **me/him lyst** it pleased me/him, I/he wanted *Pe* 146, 181, *G* 2049; (b) *personal v* like *C* 1000; desired, wished *Pe* 1141, *Pa* 51; chose *C* 1356; **went as hit lyste** went its own uncontrolled way *C* 415

lysten (1) *n* power of hearing *C* 586*

lysten (2) *v* listen to, hearken *Pe* 880, *G* 30; ~ **his lif** hear his confession *G* 1878*; *pa* **lystened** listened *G* 2006

lystily *adv* with careful dexterity *G* 1190, 1334

lyte (1) *n* little amount; few (persons) *C* 119, *G* 701; **a** ~ somewhat *G* 1777

lyte (2) *n* delay; **draw allyt** hold back, delay *C* 599; **allyte drowen** held back, remained at a distance *G* 1463*; **on lyte lette** put off, hold up *G* 2303

lyth *n* limb; **lufsum of ~ and lere** lovely in form and face *Pe* 398

lythe *v* assuage, soothe *Pe* 357; cf. **lethe** (2)

lyve (1), **lyves** see **lif**

lyve (2) *v* (*pres* **lyvyes**, *pl* **lyves**; *pa* and *pa ppl* **lyved**) live(s), lived *Pe* 477+, *subj* *C* 581; *pres ppl* **lyvyande** living *Pe* 700

ma *v* (northern contracted form of *make*) *imp* *C* 625, *pres* **mas** *C* 695, *pl* **man** *Pe* 512; **ma fest** celebrate, rejoice *Pe* 283; **mas ... rescowe** effects deliverance *Pe* 610; **mas mery/mirthe** makes merry, is festive *G* 106, 1885

mach *n* mate, mess-mate *C* 124*, partner *C* 695

mach *v* oppose *G* 282; *pres* **maches him with** bargains with *Pa* 99, **for** ... ~ serves *C* 1512

mad(de) *adj* perverse *Pe* 267*, 1199; wanton, madcap *Pe* 290*;

morally stupid C 654; **so ~ arayed** in so frenzied a state *Pe* 1166
madde *subj* be beside oneself, behave wildly *Pe* 359; commit folly G 2414
maddyng *vn* reckless folly or imprudence *Pe* 1154
maden *pa pl* (of 'make') made G 71, 542, 910, 1405, 1953, 1957
maghtyly *adv* mightily, with violence C 1267 G 2262, 2290
make *n* mate, lover C 703, spouse *Pe* 759, C 994; peer, equal C 248; *pl* **makes** spouses C 331; companions C 334
made *pa* (variant of 'made') (used at line ending) C 1071, 1308, *Pa* 303, G 1112, 1142, 1324, (and for *b-verse metre*) C 254
makeles *adj* without mate *Pe* 785; peerless *Pe* 435, 733, 757*, 781
males *n pl* leather bags used when travelling G 1129, 1809
malicious *adj* wicked, sinful *Pa* 508; fierce, merciless *Pa* 522
malscrande *pres ppl* bewildering, confounding C 991*; *pa ppl* **malskred** dazed *Pa* 255
malt(e) *v* flow from a melting heart C 776; **mynde myght ~ in** the mind could comprehend *Pe* 224*; **~ my mynde within** sink into my comprehension C 1566*; *pa* **malt** melted, collapsed *Pe* 1154*; condensed into rain G 2080
malyce *n* ill-will, fierceness C 250, *Pa* 4, 523; sinfulness, wickedness C 518, *Pa* 70
man(ne) (1) *n* (a) man, person *Pe* 69+, C 869*; servant C 436, 613, 771, 1512, *Pa* 287; (in address) G 1746, 1800; *gen* **manes** man's *Pe* 223+; **my manes mynde** my mortal mind *Pe* 1154; *pl* **men** men *Pe* 290+; servants C 818; (b) *impers pron* one *Pe* 165+, **me** C 553*
man (2) see **ma**
manace *v* threaten *Pa* 422; *pa* **mansed** G 2345
manayre *n* manorial estate
mancioun *n* dwelling place C 309
maner (1) *n* manor-house *Pe* 918, manorial estate *Pe* 1029
maner (2) *n* custom, habit G 90; kind(s), sort(s) G 485; modality, mode of proceeding C 701; **on this ~** in this way G 1730; *pl* **maneres** (good) manners G 924, seemly behaviour *Pe* 382*; ways, respects *Pa* 22
manerly *adj* seemly G 1656; *adv* with propriety C 91
manes see **man(ne)** (1)
mangerie *n* banquet, feast C 52, 1365
mankynde *n* mankind C 278, 564; **~ grete** the great race of man *Pe* 637
manne see **man(ne)** (1)
mansed see **manace**
mansede *part adj* 'excommunicated', i.e. cursed, accursed C 774, *Pa* 82
mantyle *n* mantle, sleeveless garment worn over tunic *Pa* 342, G 153,

- 878, 1736, 1831
mare *adv* (northern variant of **more**) *Pe* 145
margery(e) *n* pearl *Pe* 1037; ~ **perle** pearl *C* 556; *pl* **margarys** *Pe* 199, 206
marre *v* destroy *G* 2262; *pres* 2&3s **marres** destroy, spoil *Pe* 23, perishes *Pa* 172, *pl* **marre** destroy, harm *C* 279, *subj* **marre** go distracted, be distraught *Pe* 359; *pa* **marred** was distraught *Pa* 479; were destroyed *C* 991; *pa ppl* **was marred** had been destroyed *Pa* 476
marryng *vn* undoing *C* 186
marschal *n* an official responsible for protocol in hall *C* 91*, 118, 1427
maryage *n* marriage *Pe* 779; **to His** ~ in marriage to Himself *Pe* 413; *pl* **maryages** *C* 186
marye *v* marry *C* 52; *pa ppl* **maryed** married *C* 815
mas see **ma**
mascle *n* spot *Pe* 726*, 843; *C* 556
mascelles *adj* spotless, immaculate *Pe* 732*, 744–5, 756, 768–9, 781–2, 900, 923
mase *n* confusion *C* 395
Mass *n* *Pe* 1115, *C* 51, *G* 592, 755, 1135, 1311, 1414, 1558, 1690 (**Messe** *Pe* 497, 862*) **Mass**; **highe** ~ full **Mass** for Sundays and festivals *Pa* 9; **Masse-while** time at which **Mass** is said *G* 1097*
masseprest *n* priest *G* 2108
mate (1) *adj* distraught *Pe* 386; agitated, discomposed *G* 336; exhausted *G* 1568
mate (2) *v* confound, baffle in argument *Pe* 613*
mater *n* subject matter, content or meaning of words *C* 1566*, 1617, 1635; *pl* **materes myn** my own materials *Pa* 503*
matynes *n* Matins (sung between midnight and daybreak) *G* 756*, 2188
maugre *n* ill will, wrath *C* 250; *prep* despite: ~ **his mun/my chekes/ his hed** against his/my will *Pa* 44, 54, *G* 1565
mawe *n* stomach *Pa* 255, 299
may *n* maiden *Pe* 435, 781, 961, *G* 1795*
mayden *n* maiden, virgin *Pe* 162, *C* 248, 1069; *pl* **maydenes** *Pe* 869, 1115, *C* 815, 867, 934, 1267, 1299
maymes *pres* maims, mutilates *G* 1451
mayn(e) *adj* outstanding, noteworthy *G* 94; large *C* 514*, strong *G* 497*, mighty, powerful *G* 187, 336
maynful(le) *adj* powerful *Pe* 1093; mighty *C* 1730
maynly *adv* forcefully, loudly *C* 1427
mayntnaunce *n* abetting *C* 186*
mayntyne *v* engage in *Pa* 523; *pres* **maynteines** provides for *G* 2053

mayster *n* master C 771, 1512, *Pa* 10, man one is assigned to serve G 2090; Lord (= God) *Pe* 462, C 1113; *Pa* 238*; overlord, commander C 748, 1237; man of social consequence G 136; leader or lord of a nation or household *Pe* 900, C 125, 1427, 1793; *pl* **maysters** masters, rulers C 252, 1740; masters of their craft, professionals G 1603

maysterful *adj* asserting one's own will, domineering *Pe* 401; tyrannous, coercive C 1328

maystery *n* feat, achievement C 1241, *Pa* 482; *pl* **maystres** theological mysteries *Pa* 329*; special skills, arts G 2448

me (1) *acc and dat of 'I'* me, to me *Pe* 10 +; *ethic dative* *Pa* 108, G 1905, 1932, 2014, 2144

me (2) see **man(ne)** (1)

mede *n* meed, reward *Pe* 620, C 12, 1632, *Pa* 11, 22, 39, 55; *pl* **medes** C 24

medoes *n pl* meadows, grasslands C 1761

megre *adj* emaciated C 1198

meke *adj* meek *Pe* 404, 815, 832, 961, C 815; merciful C 771; *as n* **thy** ~ your meek ones C 776

mekely *adv* humbly, respectfully G 756; quietly, unassumingly C 783

mekenesse (**mekenisse** *Pe* 406*) *n* meekness *Pa* 15, 32

mekned *pa* humbled, softened C 1328

mele (1) *n* meal G 999; grain C 625, flour C 226

mele (2) (**melle** *Pe* 797, 1118) *v* (*pres* **meles**; *pa* **meled**) speak(s)/spoke, say(s)/said, tell(s)/told *Pe* 497 +

meled see **mele** (2) and **melle** (2)

melle (1) *n* midst: **in** ~ in the midst of, among *Pe* 1127, thereto, as well G 1451

melle (2) *v* mingle, go into G 2503; *pp* **meled** been concerned with *Pa* 329*

melle (3) see **mele** (2)

melly *n* combat G 342, 644

membre *n* part of body G 2292; *pl* **membres** members, parts of the body *Pe* 458

mended *pa* improved G 883; cf. **amende**

mendes *n pl* amends, remedy *Pe* 351*

mending *vn* amendment, improvement *Pe* 452; reform of behaviour C 764

mene (1) *adj* poor, undistinguished C 1241

mene (2) *v* mean, signify *Pe* 293, 951*, G 233, 1197*; say, tell C 1635; *pres* **menes** means C 1567, 1730, 1733, 2s **menes** speak of *Pe* 937

meng *imp* mix together C 625; join, unite C 337; *pa ppl* **menged** mixed, mingled G 1720

mensclaght *n* homicide C 182

mensk(e) *n* honour C 121, 522, nobility, high class *Pe* 162, C 1740; social *and/or* moral excellence G 914, 2052; *as adj* comely, elegant G 964*; **with** ~ with honour, honourably *Pe* 783, G 834; **of** ~ **speken** say gracious things C 646; *pl* **menskes** courtesies, graces G 2410*

menskes *pres* graces, adorns C 141; *pa ppl* **mensked** graced, adorned G 153; honoured C 118

menskful(le) *adj* elegant, fine G 1809; *as n* high-ranking or distinguished person(s) G 555, 1268

menskly *adv* courteously, honourably G 1312, 1983

menteene *v* stand by, defend *Pe* 784

menyng *vn* cognition, understanding G 924

merciable *adj* merciful, forgiving C 1113, *Pa* 238

mercyles *adj* merciless C 250

mere (1) *n* stretch of water *Pe* 158, C 991, *Pa* 112; *pl* **meres** lakes, pools *Pe* 140; waters *Pe* 1166

mere (2) *n* limit, boundary *Pa* 320, border C 778, demarcated place G 1061

mere (3), **merier**, **meriest** see **mery**

merier, **meriest** see **mery**

merk (1) *n* darkness C 894, *Pa* 291

merk (2) *adj* dark, obscure C 1617

merk (3) *n* target, place aimed at G 1073*

merkkes *pres* takes aim at G 1592; places C 637; *pa and pa ppl* **merked** inscribed, recorded C 1617, 1727; tooled C 1487; ordained, appointed C 558; sited, placed *Pe* 142

mervayl(e) *n* (*as sensation or phenomenon*) marvel *Pe* 157 +, wonder C 586; horror G 718; *as adj* extraordinary *Pa* 81; **no** ~ no wonder G 2307; *pl* **mervayles** wonders *Pe* 64*

mervelous *adj* wondrous *Pe* 1166

mery, **mere** *adj and adv* pleasing(ly), beautiful(ly), splendid *Pe* 23 +; goodly, fine C 331, 783, 934; lovely G 1447, nice, convenient C 417; happy, glad C 130, G 497, merry G 1086, 'on good form' G 1891, joyfully, happily G 1623; **in the mery morning** conveniently in the morning C 804; **make/mas/made/maden ... mery** make/made merry, be festive G 1313, 1681, 1885, 1953, 2468; *comp* **the mo the merier** the more numerous (they are) the better pleased (they are) *Pe* 850*; *super* **meriest** most beautiful *Pe* 199, 435, most handsome C 254, G 142, most pleasant C 701, most splendid G 1915; cf. **mirth**

meryly *adv* joyfully, joyously C 493; fairly, in due course G 740*; cheerfully, good-humouredly G 2295, 2336; in sport, without aggression G 2345

meschaunce *n* mishap, evil *G* 2195

meschef *n* misfortune, affliction, harm *Pe* 275, *Pa* 209, 484;
destruction, perdition *C* 373, *G* 1774; *pl* **meschefes** crises *C* 1164,
evils, mischances *C* 708

mese *v* temper, moderate *C* 764

message *n* message *Pa* 81; messenger *C* 454

Messe see **Masse**

messe *n* serving of food or course at a feast *G* 1004; ?meal *G* 999; *pl*
messes portions *C* 637, dishes *G* 999

mester *n* need *C* 67; ~ **were** it would be necessary *Pa* 342

mesurable *adj* temperate *C* 859

measure *n* dimensions, measurement *G* 137, extent *Pe* 224;
moderateness, temperateness *C* 215, 247, 565, *Pa* 295

metail *n* metal, metalwork *G* 169; *pl* **metalles** (precious) metals *C*
1513

mete (1) *n* food *Pe* 641 +, meal *C* 118, 125, *G* 543, 887, 1097, 1312,
snack *G* 1414; *pl* **metes** foods, dishes *C* 1354, *G* 121, 1952; **mete**
tyme mealtime *G* 71

mete (2) *adj* fitting, appropriate *Pe* 1063, *C* 637; corresponding *C* 337,
commensurate *Pa* 420; **thereto ful** ~ most consistent with that *Pe*
833; ~ **to** commensurate with *C* 1662, extending to *G* 1736

mete (3) *v* (*pres* **metes**, *pl* **meten**; *pa* **mette**, *pl* **mette(n)**, *pa ppl* **met**)
meet(s), met *Pe* 380 +; goes/went forward to meet *G* 1932, 2235;
meet/met with, find *Pe* 329, *C* 86, *G* 1720, 1723; congregate *Pe*
918, assembled *C* 1394

metely *adv* in due or regular manner *G* 1004, 1414

meten *v* measure *Pe* 1032

methe *n* restraint, self-control *C* 215*, 247, 565; relenting mercy *C*
436

methles *adj* without restraint, violent *C* 273, *G* 2106

mette(n) see **mete** (3)

mettes *n pl* measures *C* 625

meve *v* move *G* 1565, go *G* 1965; prompt, cause *G* 985; ~ **to** move
against *G* 1157*; *pres* **meves** moves *C* 303, *pl* **meven** arise, occur *Pe*
64; *pres ppl* **mevande** walking, proceeding *C* 783; *pa* **meved** stirred,
made busy *Pe* 156; motivated, prompted *G* 90; went *G* 1312

meyny *n* those serving a particular master *Pe* 542; followers, retinue
Pe 892&, *Pa* 10, *G* 101; household *C* 331, 454, *G* 1957&

mirthe *n* pleasure, joy, delight *Pe* 1149 +; revelry *G* 45, 1656, 1952;
singing, music *Pe* 92; festive game, sport *C* 1519; **mas/make/made**
~ makes/make/made merry, is festive *G* 106, 899, 982; **speeches of**
~ cheerful talk *G* 860, **talked aye** ~ spoke all the while cheerfully
C 132, **nevened bot** ~ spoke only cheerfully *G* 541; *pl* **mirthes**
sources of joy, delights *Pe* 140; gaieties, amusements *G* 40; cf. **mery**

mirthes *pres* gladdens, gives joy to *Pe* 862

mislikes *impers v* ~ **me** displeases me *G* 1819; *subj* **him** **mislike** *G* 2307

misschafen *part adj* deformed, perverted *C* 1355*

mistrauthe *n* unfaithfulness, disobedience *C* 996

mo *adj* more (in number) *Pe* 151, 870, 1194, *C* 98, 1303, *Pa* 180, *G* 23, 730, 770; **the** ~ *Pe* 340*; **no** ~ no others *C* 940, *G* 2322*; **any** ~ any others *G* 2324; **the** ~ **the merier** see **mery**

mod *n* heart, spirit *Pe* 401, 738, 832, *C* 215, 565; anger *C* 764;

intention, purpose *C* 1635; state of mind *C* 713, attitude *G* 1475

moder *n* mother *Pe* 435, *G* 754, 2320; *gen* **moder** mother's *C* 1303

mody *adj* brave *C* 1303; bold in wrongdoing, arrogant *Pa* 422

moght(e) *pa* (variant form of **myght(e)** (2)) might, could *G* 872; 2s **moghtes** couldst *C* 655

mokke *n* dirt, dust; **bot** ~ **and mul** mere dust and ashes *Pe* 905

mold(e) *n* earth *Pa* 479, *C* 514, 522; (**up**)**on** (**the/this**) ~ on the earth *C* 279, 286, 558, 613, 1114*, 1656, in the world *C* 708, *G* 137, 914, 964, 1795; *pl* **moldes** clods of earth *Pe* 30; patches of earth, dry land *C* 454; **wrapped in moldes** in the grave *Pa* 494

mon *pres* (ON equivalent of **mot**) must *G* 1811, 2354

mone (1) *n* lament *G* 737*, lamentation, mourning *C* 373; grief *Pe* 374

mone (2) *n* moon *Pe* 1044–5, 1056–7, 1072, *Pa* 167, *G* 1313; the lunar cycle that constitutes a month *Pe* 1080, *G* 532*; (**an**)**under** ~ beneath the skies, in the world *Pe* 923, 1081, 1092, in existence, at all *Pe* 1068

mony *adj and pron* many, many a *Pe* 160 +; ~ **a** many a, many *Pe* 775 +; ~ **one** many a man *G* 442

monyfolde *adv* many times over *C* 278

monyth *n* month *C* 427, 493, 1030

mor *n* moorland, wasteland *C* 1673, *G* 2080; **on** ~ on earth *C* 385

more see **much**

morn(e) *n* morning *C* 493 +; morrow, next day *C* 1001, 1793, *G* 566, 1404, 1670, 1680, 1884, 2350; cf. **moroun**

mornyf *adj* mournful, grieving *Pe* 386

moroun *n* (variant of **morn(e)**) *G* 1208, 1213

morsel *n* small meal *G* 1690; bite, small portion *C* 620

most(e) see **much**

mot *pres* must *Pe* 25 +; (in wishes and blessings) may *Pe* 397, *C* 580, *G* 342, 387, 2053, 2120, 2239, 2378; 2s **most** must *Pe* 319, 348, *C* 1673; *pa* **most(e)** (*pl* **moste**) must, had to *Pe* 623, *C* 407, 1331, *G* 1287, 1958; would have to *C* 1031, *Pa* 55

note (1) *n* defensive ditch, moat *G* 764; (community belonging to a castle, court, community or city ruled over by a lord *Pe* 142, 948*, 973, *G* 635, 910, 2052; *pl* **notes** *Pe* 949

mote (2) *n* speck, spot *Pe* 726*, 764&, *C* 556, *Pa* 299; speck of dust *Pa* 268, 456; **a mote** a whit, at all *G* 2209

mote (3) *n* dispute, argument *Pe* 853

mote (4) *n* note on a hunting horn; *pl* **motes** *G* 1141, 1364

moteles *adj* spotless, flawless *Pe* 899, 925, 961

motes *2s pres* argue, allege *Pe* 613*

moul *n* earth, dirt *Pe* 23

moun see **mowe**

mount *n* mountain *Pa* 320; hill, high ground *Pe* 868, *C* 994, *G* 718, 740; *pl* **mountes** *G* 1730, 2080

mountaynes *n pl* mountains *C* 385

mountes *pres ~ to* amounts to *Pa* 322, *pl* **mountes** increase *Pe* 351; cf. **amount**

mounture *n* riding horse *G* 1691

mourkenes *pres* grows dark, becomes overcast *C* 1760

mourkne *v rot* *C* 407*

mourne *v* grieve, be unhappy *G* 1795*; *subj* **mourne** *Pe* 359; *pres pl* **mournes** mourn for sins, repent *Pa* 508; *pres ppl* **mournande** grieving *C* 778

mournyng *n* sorrowing, lamentation *Pe* 262; regret *G* 543; grief, distress *G* 1751, 1800

mowe, moun *pres pl* (variants of 'may'; used for rhyme) *Pe* 536, *G* 1397

much *adj and adv* much *Pe* 234 +; large, great *G* 182; *comp* **more** more *Pe* 144 +; larger *G* 2100; greater *Pe* 576, *Pa* 114, *G* 1881; further *C* 759, 762; moreover *Pe* 565; as *n* what is greater *Pe* 600; *super* **most(e)** biggest *C* 254, 385, *G* 137, 141, greatest *G* 914, most *G* 985

muckel *adj* (earlier form of **much**) great *C* 52, 366, 514, 1164, *Pa* 268; as *n* great size *G* 141; *adv* much *Pa* 324

mudde *n* mud *C* 407

muged *pa* drizzled, smurred *G* 2080

mul *n* dirt, dust, ashes *Pe* 382, 905, *C* 736

mulne *n* mill *G* 2203

multiplyes *pl imp* reproduce *C* 522; *pa* **multiplyed** multiplied *C* 278

mun *n* Norse-derived word for mouth *Pa* 43

mused *pa* used their minds, lived *G* 2424*

mute *n* pack (of dogs) *G* 1451, 1720, baying of a pack *G* 1915

myddelerde *n* earth, world *G* 2100

myddes *n in the ~* in the centre *C* 1388, *Pa* 380, *G* 74, 1004; cf. **in-mydde(s)**

mydmorn *n* about 9.00 a.m. *G* 1073*, 1280

mydnight *n* midnight *C* 894, *G* 218

mydoverunder *n* ?noon *G* 1730*

myght(e) (1) (**myste** *Pe* 462*) *n* might, power *Pe* 765 +; *pl* **myghtes**

powers C 644, strength G 282; **alle myghtes**, ~ ... **alle** all forms of power C 748, 1699

myght(e) (2), *pa* 2s **myghtes** (Pe 317), *pl* **myght(e)**, **myghten** (C 1720) might, could Pe 34 +, was capable of G 1569; could potentially Pa 181; **as he myghte** to the best of his ability, as promptly as he could Pa 351

myghty *adj* mighty, possessed of power or authority C 273, 1237; *as n the* ~ the powerful C 279

myke *n* crutch to support mast C 417

mylde *adj* gentle Pe 961; lenient, benevolent Pa 400, 522, C 728; meek, respectful Pe 1115; *as n* mild ones Pe 721; *super* **myldest** kindest, most benign G 754*

myle, myles *n pl* miles C 674, 1387, G 770, 1078

mylke *n* milk C 637; *v* milk C 1259

myn *poss adj* (used before words beginning with an 'h' or a vowel) my Pe 128 +; **by** ~ **one** alone Pe 243; (used predicatively or following a noun) **myn(e)** my Pe 335; mine, my own C 1668, G 342; *pron* mine Pe 1208, G 1816, 1942, what is mine Pe 566

mynde *n* mind, heart Pe 156 +; memory G 1484; decision C 1502*

mynes see **mynne** (2)

mynge *v* give mind to Pe 853; *pa ppl* **mynged** drew attention to, announced G 1422

mynne (1) *comp adj* smaller, lesser G 1881

mynne (2) *v* have in mind, be mindful of C 771; think about G 1992; record, report, say G 141; **of** ~, ~ **(up)on** be mindful of, attend to Pe 583, G 1681, *subj* 1769, think of, remember C 436, G 1800; *pres* **mynes** remembers, commemorates G 995; *as impers v* **me mynes on** I remember C 25; *pa* **mynned** exhorted G 982

mynster *n* minster, (cathedral-)church Pe 1063, Pa 268; temple C 1267

mynstralsye *n* music, playing of musical instruments C 121, G 485, 1952

mynt *n* aim, intention Pe 1161; aimed blow, feint G 2345, 2350, *pl* **myntes** G 2352

myntes *pres* ordains (to happen) C 1628; directs a blow G 2290; *pa* **myntest**, **mynt** directed a blow G 2262, 2274

mynystered *pa* ministered, served C 644

myre *n* mire, (literal or moral) slough C 1114, Pa 279, G 749

mys *n* amice, overgarment Pe 197

mysboden *pa ppl* mistreated, ill-treated G 2339

mysdede(s) *n pl* transgressions, sins Pa 287, G 760, 1880

myself, myselven *adj and pron* myself G 1052, 2434 +; *non-refl pron in oblique case* me Pe 52, 414, C 1572, Pa 386

myserecorde *n* clemency, pardon, forgiveness Pe 366

mysetente *pa ppl* mis-attended to, misconsidered: **your tale** ~ chosen your words wrongly *Pe* 257*

mysse (1) *n* want, deprivation, need, bereavement *Pe* 262, 364; sin, misdeed *Pa* 420; *pl* **mysse** misdeeds *G* 2391

mysse (2) *v* lack, be without *Pe* 329, 382; fail to get or attain to *C* 189, 551; *pa ppl* **myst** unobtainable *C* 1198; absent *C* 994

mysseleve *n* misbelief, heresy *C* 1230

mysse-payed *pa ppl* dissatisfied, displeased *Pa* 399

mysse-yeme *v* heed amiss, fail in proper care for *Pe* 322

myst see **mysse** (2)

myste *n* see **myght(e)** (1)

mysterys *n pl* spiritual mysteries, divine truths *Pe* 1194

myte *n* mite; **not a** ~ not one jot *Pe* 351

mythe *subj* conceal, suppress (feelings) *Pe* 359*

naf (= *ne haf* have not *G* 1066), **nade** (= *ne hade*) had not *C* 404, *Pa* 257, *G* 724, 763, 1815

naght *n* (variant of **night(e)**; used for rhyme) *Pe* 1203

nappe *v* sleep *Pa* 465

nakerys *n pl* kettledrums *G* 1016; *gen pl* **nakryne** of kettledrums *C* 1413, *G* 118

nas (= *ne was*) was not *C* 727, 983, 1226, *Pa* 222

nase *n* nose *G* 962

nature *n* the material world *Pe* 749, *C* 1087; the laws governing the world *C* 709

naule see **navel**

nautheles *adv* nevertheless *Pe* 877, 889, 950

nauther *adj and adv* neither *G* 1552; *conj* nor *G* 1552, ~ ... **ne** neither ... nor *Pe* 465 +; **ne** ... ~ nor ... either *Pe* 751, *C* 1028, 1226, *Pa* 392, *G* 203, 659, 2367; **ne** ... ~ ... **ne** nor ... nor ... nor *C* 1556

navel, **naule** *n* navel *Pe* 459; (poeticism) stomach *Pa* 278*

nay (1) *adv* no, *nay* *C* 729, 746, 758, *G* 256, 279, 1222, 1813, 2250, 2407, 2471; *as n* *G* 706, 2471

nay (2), **nayed** *pa* denied *C* 805*, *G* 1836; said no, declined *C* 65

nayles *n pl* nails, studs *G* 603

naylet *pa ppl* nailed, studded *G* 599*

nyate *v* use *C* 531; *pa ppl* **nyated** uttered, repeated *G* 65

nyatly *adv* effectively, aptly *C* 480

ne (or **ne ... not**) *adv* not *Pe* 4 +; *conj* nor *Pe* 262 +; **ne no** nor any *G* 204, 205, 696

nece *n* niece *Pe* 233

nedde see **nedes**

nede (1) *n* need *Pe* 1045, *C* 1163; *pl* **nedes** needs, business *G* 2216

nede (2), **nedes** *adv* necessarily, inevitably *Pe* 25 +

nedes *impers v pres* **hit** ~ there is needed G 404; *pa* **hem nedde** there was necessary for them, they needed Pe 1044

nedles *adj* pointless, fruitless C 381, Pa 220

negh (1) *adj, adv and prep* near(ly) C 484, 803, G 929, 1671, 1771, 1922; **wel** ~ very nearly, almost Pe 528, 581, C 704, 1422, G 7, 867, **ful** ~ **into** very close to G 697; cf. **ner(e)** (1)

negh(e) (2) *v* come near, approach C 143, 805, 1017, G 1054, 1575, 1836; *pres* **neghes** G 1998; *subj* **neghe** C 32; *pa* **neghed (to)** approached C 1754, Pa 352, 465, G 132, 697, 929

neked *n* mere small piece, scarcely anything G 1062, 1805

nek(ke) *n* neck C 1638, G 420, 2255, 2310, 2484, 2498, 2506

neme see **nyme**

nemme *v* name Pe 997

ner(e) (1) *prep* near C 414, 1558, G 322; **this blisse** ~ into the vicinity of this bliss Pe 286; **Him** ~ near Him, in His company Pe 404; *adv* nearly G 729, 1995; **wel** ~ very nearly C 1585, Pa 169; *comp* **nerre** nearer Pe 233, Pa 85, G 237, 556, 1305; *super* **next** closest to G 1780, nearest, soonest C 261; cf. **negh**

nere (2) (= *ne were*) were not C 21, Pa 244

nerre see **ner(e)** (1)

nesch *adj as n* what is soft Pe 606

neve *n* niece, fist C 1537

neven *v* name, specify C 1376, cite G 58; *pres* **nevenes** names, calls by G 10, *pl* **nevenen** call upon C 1525*; *pa and pa ppl* **nevened** uttered G 541, rehearsed C 410, G 65

never *adv* never Pe 4*; (*with* **wit** [*know*]) not at all Pe 376, G 399, 1487

nevertheless *adv* nevertheless, none the less G 474; cf. **never the ... later** C 1352, G 541

new(e) *adj* new Pe 155+; different G 118, 132; distinctive G 636*; novel G 1401, 1655; *as n* Pe 943, *gen* **newes** by way of a new thing G 1407*; *adv* anew Pe 662, 1080, 1123; newly G 60, 599, 2223; **New Yere** G 60, 105, 284, 404, 1062, 1668, 1998, 2244, 2400, **New Yeres morne/day** New Year's Day G 453, 1054, 1075, 1669, 1675, 1968

next see **ner(e)** (1)

nice *adj* foolish C 824, G 323, 358; frivolous, foppish C 1354; (morally) obtuse, dissolute, depraved C 1359

nieghbor *n* neighbour Pe 688

nif (= *ne if*) if ... not C 21, 424, G 1769

night(e) *n* night Pe 116+, Pa 294*; *pl* **nighes** G 730; **on nighte(s)** in the evenings G 47, at night Pe 243, G 693

nikked *pa* gave a negative reply G 706, 2471

nis *pres* is not Pe 951, 1071, 1266*; ~ **no wye** there is not any man Pe

nobelay, **nobleye** *n* nobility, superiority C 1091; nobleness of mind, honour G 91

noble *adj* (of persons) noble C 1218, 1338, 1430, G 675, worthy G 1912, 2149, superior C 1302; (of non-animates) noble C 167, grand C 1372, G 1873, fine C 121, excellent G 118, 514, 917, 1858, sumptuous G 753, valuable C 1281, *Pa* 531; *as n* noble man G 1750, **his** ~ his noblemen C 1226

noght(e) (1) *n* nothing *Pe* 274 +; **oght of** ~ something out of nothing *Pe* 274; **right** ~ nothing at all *Pe* 520; **noght (...)** **bot** nothing except, simply *Pe* 337, 657, 955, G 1267, 1833; **for** ~ under any consideration G 1865; in vain C 888

noght (2) *adv* not at all, by no means *Pe* 588 +

noghty *adj* worthless, immoral C 1359

noke *n* corner, angle *Pa* 278, G 660

noide (= *ne wolde*) *pa* would not *Pa* 91 +

nome(n) see **nyme**

non *adj* (used before vowels and *w-*, and *sc-* at C 21) no *Pe* 206 +; *after n* *Pe* 1141; *pron* none *Pe* 764 +, none of them G 657, 1457; no man, no one *Pe* 544 +; nothing *Pe* 215; *after negative any* *Pe* 812, 825; *pl pron and adj* **none** C 101, 262, 426

norne *v* say, tell, call (on) G 2443, ask C 803; turn G 1661; proceed G 1669*; return G 1823; *pa* **turned** declared, said C 65, 669; turned, pushed G 1771

north-est *n* north-east *Pa* 137

note (1) *n* business, matter, affair *Pe* 155*, C 1233, G 358, 420, 599, 1669; practice, usage C 727; **all was nedles her** ~ all their efforts were futile C 381, *Pa* 220

note (2) *n* tune, melody *Pe* 879; notability C 1651; *pl* **notes** notes, music *Pe* 883, C 1413, G 514

note (3) *n* construction, edifice *Pe* 922

note (4) *adj* famed G 2091; *part adj* **noted** made famous C 1659

nothing *adv* not at all G 2236

notyng *vn* making use, partaking C 1354

noumbre *n* number, amount C 737, 1283, 1376, 1731

now *adv and conj* now *Pe* 271 +, now that *Pe* 283, 327, 389, **now ... now** 377

Nowel *n* (a cry celebrating Christmas) Noel! G 65*

nowthe *adv* (variant of **now**; used at line ending) *Pa* 414, G 1251, 1784, 1934, 2466

noye *v* inflict harm or damage upon C 1236, G 1575; *pres* **nyes** distresses, angers C 578; *pa* **nyed** caused trouble and affliction to C 1176; *pa ppl* **nyed** troubled, distressed C 306, 1603; cf. **nye**

noyse *n* resounding sound C 1413 +; loud words C 849, 873, *Pa* 490,

G 1423, 1448

nurned see **norne**

nurture *n* good breeding, cultivation of mind and/or manners C 1091; courtly and gracious manners G 919, 1661

nye *n* trouble, difficulty C 359*, 1376, G 58; pain G 2002, harm G 2141; displeasure, anger C 301; distress C 1002; *pl* **nyes** afflictions, harms C 1751

nyed, nyes see **noye**

nyl (= *ne will*) am/is determined not to C 513, 1261, *Pa* 41; 2s **nylt** *Pa* 346

nyme *v* (*pres nymes, pl neme; imp nym; pa nome, nem; pa ppl nomen*) take(s), took C 480, 505, *Pa* 66, G 993, 1407, 2141, has/have taken *Pe* 587, 802*; received G 809, taken, seized C 1281, 1291, *Pa* 360; consider G 1347; took/taken captive C 1613, *Pa* 360; adopted G 91; experienced C 1002; **innome** caught out *Pe* 703*

obes *pres pl* make obeisance to, bow before *Pe* 886; *pa* **obeched** *C* 745
odde *n* one left over after division into pairs *C* 505; *adj* additional *C* 426

oddely *adv* exceptionally *C* 698, 923

of *prep* of *Pe* 12 +; by *Pe* 11 +; out of, from *Pe* 3 +; with *Pe* 206, 207, *C* 1404, 1433, 1475; with regard to *C* 440, 1390, *G* 142, 2238; a number of *C* 1179, 1247, 1343, *G* 863, 1452*, 1455, some (of) *G* 338, 1533, something of *G* 1815, 1816; *adv* off *C* 630, 876, *G* 773, 1147, 1921; **has** ~ takes off *G* 2408

offer *v* make ritual offering *Pa* 335; *pa* **offred** participated in the liturgical offering *G* 593

ofte *adj* frequent *Pe* 388

oft(e) *adv* often *Pe* 14 +; *comp* **ofter** more often *Pe* 621

oghe, owe *v* owe *Pe* 543; *pres pl* **oghe** ought *G* 1526*; *pa* **oghte** ought *Pe* 1139; with pronouns generally *impers* in the sense 'ought': *subj* **us oghe** we ought *Pe* 552; **thee oghte** it behoved you, you ought *Pe* 341

oght *n* aught, anything *Pe* 1200, *C* 663, 1092, *G* 300, 1815, 2215, something *Pe* 274

oke *n* oak tree *C* 602; *pl* **okes** *G* 743, 772

olde *adj* old *C* 601, 1123, *G* 1001, 2182, 2183; former *Pe* 941, 942; 'good old' *G* 1124; **for** ~ because of being old *G* 1440; *comp* **the alder thay were** the longer they lived *Pe* 621; **alder men** elders *Pe* 887, 1119; *super* **aldest** eldest *Pe* 1042, *C* 1333; as *n* **the alder** the elder one *G* 972, 1317; **alderes** elders, leaders *G* 95; cf. **elde**

olipraunce *n* pomp, display, ostentation *C* 1349

olyve *n* olive tree *C* 487

on (1) *prep and adv* on *Pe* 41 +; thereon *Pe* 77

one (2) *num (before nouns)* one *Pe* 530 +, 860*; **on the most/sellokest/fautleste/uglokest** singly (i.e. incomparably) the biggest/most prodigious, etc *C* 892, *G* 137, 1439, 2363

one *pron* one *Pe* 293 +, *gen* **ones** one's *Pe* 864; **that one** the first *C* 299, one of them *G* 952, 954; **that ~ and that other** the one and the other *G* 2412; **mony** ~ many a one *G* 442; **at** ~ united, not at variance *Pe* 378; *adv* only *Pa* 208*, 291, 354, *G* 2074, 2249, 2345; alone *Pa* 216, 216, 240, *C* 178, 731, *G* 2155; **his** ~ of himself alone *Pe* 312, alone *G* 1048, **him** ~ singly *G* 904, **our** ~ on our own *G* 1230, 2245, **by myn** ~ on my own *Pe* 243, **thyn** ~ yourself alone *C* 923, **hit** ~ on its own *C* 927, **all him** ~ all alone *G* 749; **letes ...** ~ leave alone *C* 872, **let ...** ~ have nothing to do with *G* 2118, **let we hit** ~ let's say no more about it *C* 670

oneliche *adv* (variant of 'only') C 1749

ones *adv* once C 982, G 2280; on this one occasion C 761; ever, at any time C 1146, G 2512; formerly C 1144, G 2218; on a certain occasion C 23, 600, 601, 1357; **at ~** together C 672, all together C 732, G 895, at one and the same time C 402, 909, G 1425, 1713, 1913, at once C 519, 566, 963, 1086, 1672; **at this ~** on this occasion C 624, 801, 1090

onhede *n in ~* in the singular C 612*

onhit *pa ppl* struck *Pa* 411*

on-yed *adj* one-eyed C 102

open *v* open G 1183; bring to light C 1660; *pres ppl* **openande** opening C 318; *pa* **opened** *Pa* 250

ordaynt *pa ppl* ordained, destined C 237

ordenaunce *n* divine plan or disposition of things C 698

ordure *n* filth C 1092, 1101

orenge *n* orange C 1044

ores *n pl* oars *Pa* 217, 221

orient *n* the Orient, the East *Pe* 3, 82; *adj* **perle ~** pearls from the East *Pe* 255

orisoun *n* prayer *Pa* 328

ornementes *n pl* accoutrements: the utensils and furnishings of a temple or church C 1284*, 1799

orpedly *adv* boldly, stoutly G 2232, sturdily C 623

other *conj* or C 42 +; **or (...)** **elles/other** or else G 1529, 1956; **or/other ... other/or** either ... or *Pa* 52, G 88, 702, 1772, 2216; or else G 2293; *adj or pron* another, the other, other *Pe* 206 +; different *Pe* 319, 935, C 1165, *Pa* 86, G 90, 132; something else *Pa* 2, 408, G 1268; second *Pe* 297, C 235, 299, *Pa* 512, G 190, 2350; other person/people *Pe* 448 +; **otheres** another's *Pe* 450; **that other** *adj* the other C 149 +, the second G 2350, *pron* the other man/woman/party C 765 +, the next (day) G 1020; **these other** (C 279, 596, 741, 937, G 1445, 1914), **those ~** (C 332, 340, *Pa* 176) (the) others, **all ~** all others C 1389, G 1249, **among ~** among the others C 25; **non other** nothing else C 342, 742, 1681, *Pa* 348, no one else C 1704, no other kind C 508; (*with super*) **-st of (all) other** -st of all C 256, 701, 1749, G 944

otherwayes *adv* in a different way C 448

otherwhile *adv* occasionally *Pa* 121

othes *n pl* oaths G 2123

out(e) *adv* out C 1679 *Pa* 314, 434, G 1727; utterly, everywhere G 1511; anywhere, at all C 1046; over, gone by C 442; worn out C 41*; **has ~** takes out G 1612

outcomlyng *n* non-native, alien C 876

outfleme *pa ppl* driven out, banished *Pe* 1177

out-taken *pa ppl* discounting, except (for) C 357, 1573
outwith *adv* from the outside *Pe* 969; on the outside C 14
overal *adv* all over, completely G 150; most particularly, most commonly G 630*
overbrayden *pa ppl* covered over, overspread C 1698
overclambe *pa* climbed over, scaled G 713
overgrown *pa ppl* overgrown G 2181, 2190
overloked *pa* looked over (their heads) G 223*
overseyed *pa ppl* passed by C 1686
overtake *v* gain G 2387*; *pa* **overtok** overtook, caught up with C 1213; *pa ppl* **overtan** overtaken *Pa* 127
overt *adj* open; unambiguous *Pe* 593
overthwert *adj* outspread C 1384; *adv* across C 316
overthwerte *prep* through G 1438
overtorned *pa* revolved, passed C 1192
overture *n* opening (at the neck or down the front of a garment) *Pe* 218
overwaltes *pres* overwhelms C 370*; *pa ppl* **overwalt** toppled, overthrown G 314*
overyede *pa* went by, passed C 1753
owe see **oghe**
owen, owne *adj* own *Pe* 559 +

pace *n* passage, section *Pe* 677
pakke *n* group, company *Pe* 929
pakked *pa ppl* packed up together C 1282
palayce *n* palace C 83, 111, 1389, 1531
palays *n* palisade, enclosing fence G 769
palle *n* a type of fine or rich cloth C 1384*, 1637
pane *n* side or face of an architectural structure *Pe* 1034; (fur) lining or trimming, facing of a garment G 154*; *pl* **panes** panels or sections (of cloth) G 855
papejays *n pl* parrots C 1465, G 611
parage *n* noble birth, noble rank *Pe* 419, C 167
paramores *n* romantic love, sexual love C 700
paraunter, paraventure *adv* peradventure, perhaps *Pe* 588, C 43, G 1009*, 1850, 2343
parchemen *n* parchment C 1134
pared *pa and pa ppl* cut C 1408, G 802; ~ **on** cut into C 1536
parformed *pa* carried out *Pa* 406, executed C 542
parfyt *adj* perfect *Pe* 1038; complete, consummate *Pe* 638
parlatyk *adj* paralysed, palsied C 1095
part *v* break open C 1107; *pres pl* **parten** part company G 2473; *pa parted* (*genealogical*) descended C 242

partles *adj* ~ **of** not possessed of *Pe* 335

partrykes *n pl* partridges *C* 57

passage *n* passage over water *Pa* 97; journey *G* 544

passe *v* (*pres* **passes** *Pa* 97, *pl* **passe(n)**; *subj* **passe** *Pa* 393, *imp* **passe** *C* 615; *pa and pa ppl* **passed**) go(es), gone *C* 395, 942, 1672, *G* 265&, went *C* 72, 769, *G* 715, 1667; proceed *Pe* 1110, *C* 1780; went out of *C* 856; passed beyond *Pe* 528; pass(ed) over *Pe* 299, *G* 2071; pass(ed) by, pass through *C* 844, *G* 2129; escape, be acquitted *Pe* 707*; surpasses *Pe* 753, *G* 654, *pres ppl* **passande** surpassing *C* 1389, *G* 1014, *pa subj* **passed** surpassed *Pe* 428; **passed out of** emanated from *C* 1654

Pater *n* Pater Noster (the Lord's Prayer) *Pe* 485, *G* 757

patrounes *n pl* lords *G* 6

paume *n* hand *C* 1533*; *pl* **paumes** hands, palms *C* 1542; flat parts of antlers *G* 1155*

paunches *n pl* stomachs (of animals) *G* 1360

pay(e) (1) *n* pleasure, satisfaction *Pe* 1, 1164&; payment *G* 2247

pay (2) *v* (*pres* **payes**; *imp* **pay**; *pa and ppl* **payed**) (a) please(s), pleased *Pe* 1165, 1201, *G* 1379; **me payed** it pleased me *Pe* 1177; (b) pay(s), payed, paid *Pe* 524*, 584, 603, 635, *G* 1941, 1945, 2341

payne (1) *n* penalty *C* 244, 716, penance *Pe* 665; physical discomfort *G* 733; pain, suffering *Pa* 525, 530 and/or punishment *Pe* 95; *C* 190; **on ~ of** under penalty of *C* 46; *pl* **paynes** discomforts, distresses *Pe* 124, *Pa* 528, pains *C* 1227

payne (2) *v refl* take pains *G* 1042; cf. **pine** (2)

paynted *pa and pa ppl* coloured by art *G* 800; portrayed, depicted *Pe* 750, *G* 611; cf. **depaynt(ed)**

payre (1) *n* pair *C* 335; ~ **by** ~ in pairs *C* 338

payre (2) *v* be weakened *G* 1735; *pres* **payres** suffers impairment *C* 1124; *pa* **payred** failed, weakened *G* 650, 1456; *pa ppl* **payred** impaired in health, languishing *Pe* 246

payttrure *n* poitrel, collar or plate for a horse's breast *G* 168, 601

pece *n* piece (of armour) *G* 2021; creature *Pe* 192, 229; a piece or space of time *C* 1124*; **peche** patch *Pe* 841; *pl* **peces** fragments *C* 1348, *G* 1458

pelure *n* fur *G* 154; *pl* **pelures** pieces of fur *G* 2029

penaunce *n* suffering, tribulation *Pe* 477*, *Pa* 530; penance *Pa* 31, 376, 406; formal penalty imposed by confessor at shrift *C* 1116, 1131, *G* 2392; fare or food typical of a fast day *G* 897

pendauntes *n pl* pendant ornaments *G* 168; hanging ends of a girdle *G* 2038, 2431

penes *n pl* pens *C* 322; cf. **penne-fed**

penies *n pl* pennies, coins *C* 1118, *G* 79

penne *n* pen, stylus *C* 1546, 1724

penned *pa ppl* enclosed, shut in *Pe* 53*

penne-fed *adj* fed in a pen *C* 57; cf. **penes**

pensyf *adj* preoccupied with sad thoughts *Pe* 246

pentangel *n* five-pointed figure *G* 620*, 623, 636, 664

pented *pa* belonged (to), pertained (to) *C* 1270, *G* 204

peny *n* penny *Pe* 510, 546, 560, 562, 614; *pl* **penies** money *C* 1118, *G* 79

peple *n* people *C* 111, 396, 885, *Pa* 371, *G* 123, 664; nation *C* 651, *pl* **peples** *C* 242

pere *n* peer, equal *C* 1336, *G* 873; opposite number *C* 1214; **her**

precious ~ her equal in value *Pe* 4

perelous *adj* perilous *G* 2097

peres *n pl* fruit-trees *Pe* 104

perfet *pa ppl* perfected: ~ **upon** perfectly fashioned upon it *Pe* 208

peril *n* danger *C* 856, 942, *Pa* 114, *G* 733, 1768; **without** ~

assuredly *Pe* 695; *pl* **periles** *Pa* 85

peritotes *n pl* peridots *C* 1472*

perle *n* pearl *Pe* 1&, *C* 556, 1068, 1116–7, 1124, *G* 2364; *collective s* *Pe* 207, 219, 229; *pl* **perles** *Pe* 82&, *C* 1132, 1467, 1472, *G* 954

perre *n* jewellery, precious stones *Pe* 730, 1028, *C* 1117

persoun *n* self, being; **his** ~ his self, him *G* 913

pertly *adv* openly, clearly *C* 244 (**apertly**), *G* 544, 1941; cf. **apert**

pese *n* peace *Pa* 33, *G* 266 and/or reconciliation *Pe* 952, 953, 955;

acceptability to God *Pe* 742; **her** ~ **gete** make their peace *Pa* 423;

holden her ~ refrain from protest *Pa* 25

pich *n* black and sticky woodtar *C* 1008

piche *v* pitch, set *C* 477; *pa ppl* **piched** set, placed *G* 576, 768; see also **pyght**

pikes *pres pl* get, acquire *Pe* 573; *subj* **pike** eat *Pa* 393; *pa ppl* **piked** cleaned from dirt *G* 2017; **piked of** pecked at, eaten from *C* 1466

pinacle *n* pinnacle *G* 800, *pl* **pinacles** *C* 1463

pinaced *pa ppl* having pinnacle-like upward projections *Pe* 207

pine (1) *n* severe pain, torment *Pe* 330, *Pa* 43, *G* 747; distress, vexation *Pa* 412, *G* 1812; penance *Pa* 423; exertion; difficulty *G* 123; exertion, pains *G* 1985, **don gret** ~ take great pains, exert themselves *Pe* 511; *pl* **pin**es torments *Pa* 91

pine (2) *v* ~ **yow** take trouble *G* 1538; *pa subj* **pined me** gave myself pains or trouble *G* 1009; cf. **payne** (2); *pa ppl* **pined in fires** ? suffering from fever *C* 1095*

piped *pa* piped, cheeped *G* 747

pipes *n pl* wind instruments *C* 1081, 1413, *G* 118; *vn* **pip**ing music of pipes *G* 1017

pitously *adv* with pity, compassionately *Pe* 370; movingly, in a moved manner *Pe* 798; pitifully, pitiably *Pa* 371, *G* 747

place *n* place *Pe* 175 + ; (grand) place of residence, mansion, estate, manor *Pe* 405, 1034, *C* 72, 146, 238, 785, 1385, *G* 398, 786, 2240; *pl* **places** *C* 1013; **into place** to that place *C* 1443

planed *pa ppl* planed, smoothed *C* 310

planted *pa* planted *C* 1007*; formed, created *Pa* 111*

plaster *n pl* plastered surface of a wall *C* 1549

plat (1) *pa* swiped, chopped *C* 1265*

plat (2) *adj* flat *C* 1379

plate *n pl* plate armour *G* 204, 583; *pl* **plates** pieces of plate armour *G* 2017; plates (constructed of a mineral and inscribable) *Pe* 1036

plater *n* dish *C* 638

platful *adj* completely full *C* 83

play (1) *n* merriment, revelry *C* 1494, 1502; (usually pleasurable) occupation or interengagement *C* 700, *G* 1014, 1379

play (2) *v* (*pres* **playes**; *pa* **played**) pass(ed) the time pleurably *Pe* 261, *C* 787, *G* 1664; interengage in recreational pastime *G* 262; *refl* **play with** entertain oneself with the company of *Pa* 36, *G* 1538; *pres pl* **playes** seethes *Pa* 319

playferes *n pl* playfellows, companions *Pa* 45

playn (1) *n* field, meadow *Pe* 104, *C* 1379; *pl* **playnes** *Pe* 122, *C* 1216, *G* 1418

playn (2) *adj* smooth, pure *Pe* 178*, *C* 1068, 1134; flat, level *C* 1531; ~ ... **fro** bare of *Pa* 439*; *adv* plainly, clearly *Pe* 689

playnes *pres* ~ **on** makes complaint or accusation against *Pa* 376; *pa* and *pa ppl* **playned** lamented, mourned *Pe* 53, 242, *Pa* 371

playnt *n* legal complaint, protest *Pe* 815

plede, plete *v* sue for, argue a case for *Pe* 563, *G* 1304

plek *n* patch of land *C* 1379

pleny *v* make a complaint or accusation *Pe* 549

plesauunce *n* pleasure *G* 1246

plesaut *adj* pleasing *Pe* 1; courteous, complaisant *G* 808

plese *v* please *Pe* 484, *C* 338, find favour with *G* 1659; *pres* **pleses** *G* 1249; *pa subj* **plesed** *Pa* 376

plete see **plede**

plonttes *n pl* vegetation *Pe* 104

plow *n* plough *C* 68

plye *v* be applied to, be set on *Pe* 1039; *pres* **plyes** deviates *C* 196; *pres ppl* **plyande** overarching *Pa* 439; *pa* **plyed** was enfolded *C* 1385

plyght, plyt *n* (*pl* **plytes**) (a) state, condition *Pe* 1075, *Pa* 114, *pl* *C* 111; state of affairs, circumstances *C* 1494; occasion, matter *Pe* 1114*; **in to pore a plyght** of too inferior a nature *Pe* 1075; (b) hard plight, danger, harm *Pe* 647, 1015, *pl* *G* 733; strife, battle *G* 266*; sin, guilt *G* 2393

pobbel *n* pebble, small stone *Pe* 117

pole *n* body of water *Pe* 117; *pl* **poles** *Pa* 310

polle *n* (top of the) head *C* 1265

polment *n* vegetable broth *C* 628, 638

polyce *v* ~ **him** give himself a lustre *C* 1131; *pa ppl* **polysed** polished, burnished *G* 576; rubbed free of blemish *C* 1068, *G* 2393, smoothened *C* 1134; decorated, embellished *G* 2038

pomegarnades *n pl* pomegranates *C* 1466*

porchas *n* what is acquired, gains *G* 1941

porchase *v* acquire, obtain *Pe* 744; *pres pl* **purchases** *Pe* 439

porche *n* space (with no walls and a roof supported by columns) in front of a dwelling *C* 785

pore *adj* poor, humble, lowly *Pe* 573, 1074, *G* 1538, 1945; inferior *Pe* 1075; **thy servant ...** ~ (*C* 773), as *n* **thy** ~ (*C* 615) your poor servant; as *n* **the** ~ the poor *C* 127; *adv* poorly *C* 146

porfyl *n* ornamental border (of a garment) *Pe* 216

port (1) *n* gateway *C* 856; (as sobriquet) **de la Porte** *G* 555

port (2) *n* port *Pa* 90, 97

portales *n pl* portals, gateways *Pe* 1036

porter *n* gatekeeper, entrance guard *G* 808, 813, 2072

portrayed *pa and pa ppl* decorated, adorned *C* 1271; fashioned, depicted *C* 700, 1465; ~ **lettres** engraved letter-shapes *C* 1536

porvay *v* **me** ~ provide myself with *Pa* 36; *pres* **porvayes a mynde** adopts a plan *C* 1502*

postes *n pl* pillars, columns *C* 1278

potage *n* gruel, soup *C* 638

poursent *n* precinct, (limits of) circumscribed area *C* 1385; **in** ~ in the perimeter *Pe* 1035

poverté *n* poverty *Pa* 13, 31, 35, 41, 43, 45, 528

powdered *pa ppl* scattered *Pe* 44, *G* 800

poynt(e) *n* point *G* 2392; condition, attribute *C* 196, *Pa* 1*, 531; health *G* 2049; (*constituent part*) instance, particular subdivision *Pe* 309, article (of faith), principle *Pe* 594; (*smallest part*) note of a song *Pe* 891, point of time, critical or decisive moment *G* 2284; (*centre, midpoint*) ~ **of her play** height of their revelry *C* 1502, ~ **of his pryde** height of his pomp *C* 1677; **put to a** ~ placed in a condition *Pa* 35; **at the** ~ at the relevant moment *Pa* 68; **at this ilke** ~ in this state of things *C* 628; *pl* **poyntes** heads of arrows *G* 1456; points, tips, angles *G* 627, 658; constituent parts *G* 654, qualities *G* 654; issues raised, observations *G* 902*

poynthe *v* set down in writing *G* 1009*; *pa ppl* **poynted of golde** picked out with gold *C* 1408*

poyntel *n* pointed tool for incising letters into wax or parchment *C* 1533

poysened *pa ppl* poisoned *C* 1095*; cf. **enpoysened**

prounce *v* prance *G* 2064

pray (1) *n* booty, spoils; gain, enrichment *Pe* 439*; **in** ~ as captives *C* 1297*

pray(e) (2) *v* ask *C* 232, 615, *G* 1219, 1839, 2398, 2439; pray, pray to *Pe* 484, *G* 254, 757; *pres pl* **prayen** *Pa* 225; *pres ppl* **prayande** praying *Pa* 327; *pa and pa ppl* **prayed** asked *Pe* 714, 1192, *G* 1850, invited *C* 72

prayed *pa* made prey of, plundered *C* 1624

prayer(e) *n* prayer *Pe* 355, *Pa* 303, 412, 423, prayers, praying *G* 759; devotional observance *Pe* 618

prayse *v* praise *Pe* 301, *C* 195; esteem, value *C* 148, *Pa* 47, *G* 356, 1850; *pres* **prayses** compliments *G* 2072; *pa* **praysed** revered, esteemed, lauded *C* 1313; showed respect to *C* 146; praised *C* 642, 1479, *G* 1630, 1633, asserted to be impressive *G* 1633; *pa ppl* **praysed** highly esteemed, superior *Pe* 1112; commended *C* 1117, *G* 913, 1228; cf. **pryse**

prece see **pres** (1)

preche *v* preach *Pa* 81, 349, 416; *pres ppl* **prechande** making clear *C* 942*

precious *adj* precious, valuable, dear *Pe* 368; sacred *C* 1282, 1496; **her ~ pere** her equal in value *Pe* 4

pref n to ... put in ~ proved on assay as *Pe* 272

prelates *n pl* high-ranking clerics *C* 1249, *Pa* 389

pres, prece (1) *n* press, crowd, crowding *Pe* 1114, *C* 880

pres (2) *adj* precious, valuable *Pe* 730; cf. **pris** (2)

pres (3) *pres pl* press forward, hasten *Pe* 957, *G* 2097; *pa* **presed** exerted force upon, assaulted *C* 1249; pressed forwards, hastened *G* 830

prese *n* acclaim, honour *Pe* 419

presense *n* presence *C* 8, 147, 1496, *G* 911

present *n* presence *Pe* 389, 1193

presented *pa and pa ppl* (of captives) handed over to *C* 1217, 1297*

presoners *n pl* prisoners, captives *C* 1217, 1297, 1308

prest (1) *n* priest *Pe* 1210, *C* 1131, *Pa* 389, *G* 1877; *pl* **prestes** *C* 8, 1249, 1265

prest (2) *adj* prompt, ready *C* 147

prest (3), **prestly** *adv* promptly, quickly *C* 628, *G* 1304*; earnestly *Pa* 303, *G* 757; eagerly *G* 911

preue *adj* possessed of prowess, doughty *G* 262; tough, enduring *Pa* 525*

prove *v* prove to be, turn out to be *C* 704; *imp* **prove thee** show yourself to be *Pa* 288; *pa ppl* **proved** declared, demonstrated *Pe* 983; shown, established *C* 1748

previly *adv* privately, discreetly *G* 1877

prik(e) *v* stimulate, incite *G* 2437; (of a horse) run, canter *G* 2049

prince *n* prince *C* 1570; lord, nobleman *C* 49+; lord (= God) *Pe* 1201&, *C* 167, 195, 1654, 1660, *Pa* 225, 282, 412, *G* 2473, *gen* **princes** *Pe* 1, 1164&; *gen* **prince** *G* 1014; *pl* **princes** noblemen, aristocracy *C* 1215, 1518, *G* 2398; cf. **prynces** *etc*

pris (1) *n* price, (great) value, worth *Pe* 193, 746, *G* 1247*, 1249, 1277, 1850, 2364; excellence, status, honour, renown *Pe* 419, *G* 912; (of a knight) superior prowess *G* 1630; pre-eminence *C* 1117*, distinction *G* 1379*; **of** ~ of value *Pe* 272, *G* 79, 615, of high standing *G* 1770, great *G* 2398; ~ **of the prophecie** the cream of the body of prophets *C* 1308, ~ **of the worlde** the best in the world *C* 1614

pris (2) *adj* valuable, precious *G* 1945; cf. **pres** and **pryse**

privy *adj* hidden *Pe* 12*; obscure, not obvious *G* 902*; private, personal, one's own *Pe* 24; *super* **to ... privyest** most in the confidence of *C* 1748

profecie *n* body of prophets *C* 1308

profecies see **professye**

proferes *pres* **ho** ~ presents herself *Pa* 40; *pres* *pl* **proferen** proffer *Pe* 1200; *pa* **profered** proffered *G* 1494; announced readiness for *Pe* 235*; aimed a blow at *G* 2346*, 2350

profert *pa* projected, juttied up *C* 1463

professye *n* prophecy, divinely revealed truth *Pe* 821; *pl* **profecies** contents of a Book of the Bible attributed to an Old Testament prophet *C* 1158

proper *adj* goodly, excellent of its kind *Pe* 686, *C* 195

property *n* inherent quality *Pe* 446; *pl* **propertes** attributes, qualities *Pe* 752

proud(e) *adj* proud *C* 232, *G* 1277; contemptuous *G* 2269; great *C* 1177, *G* 830; fine, magnificent *C* 1772, *G* 168, 601, 2049, 2104; *super* *as n* **the proudest** those of most magnificence *C* 1300; *adv* **proudly** with pomp *C* 1379, in splendour *C* 1466

prowes *n* military prowess *G* 912, 2437, excellence *G* 1249*

proved *pa* knew at first hand, met with *Pe* 4*; *pa ppl* **proved** professionally valued *G* 79, demonstrated *G* 1630, manifest *C* 1168, established *C* 1496

province *n* nation, land *C* 1300, 1614, 1624; *pl* **provinces** *G* 6

pryde *n* pride, arrogance *Pe* 401, *C* 179, 1349, 1450, 1657, *G* 681, 2437; pomp, state, magnificence *C* 1227, 1677, *G* 2038; **of** ~ magnificent *C* 1389; **with** ~ finely, impressively *G* 587

prymate *n* supreme official (especially in an ecclesiastical hierarchy) *C* 1570*

prynces *n* noblewoman *G* 1770*; cf. **prince**

pryncipal *adj* pertaining to a prince, royal *C* 1531*, 1781

pryncipalte *n* rulership, princely power *C* 1672, 1738

prys *n* capture *G* 1362*, 1601*

pryse *v* **most to** ~ most to be valued *Pe* 1131; cf. **pris** (2) and **prayse**

prysoun *n* prison *Pa* 79; prisoner *G* 1219

pryvyly *adv* in a secluded fashion *C* 238*; ?smoothly *C* 1107

pulle *v* pull, draw *C* 68; *pa pl* **pulden** tugged, dragged *C* 1265

pure (1) *adj* pure *Pe* 745, 1088; faultless, excellent *Pe* 227, *C* 1271, *G* 262, 654; true, properly so-called *C* 1570*, *G* 664; (*of gold*)

unalloyed *G* 620; *emphatic* very, actual *Pa* 319, *G* 1247, 2398; ~

Paradise Paradise itself *C* 704

pure (2), **purely** *adv* with pureness *Pe* 1004; quite, completely *C* 1660, absolutely, perfectly *G* 808; veritably *G* 802, 813

pure (3) *v* ~ **thee with** purify yourself by *C* 1116; *pa ppl* **pured(e)** purged of flaws *G* 2393, perfect *G* 912; (*of fur*) treated so as to enhance and regularize colour *G* 154*, 1737; (*of metal*) refined *G* 633*

purpose *n* purpose, plan *G* 1734; phenomenon *Pe* 185*; **put in a mad** ~ embarked on a perverse course of action *Pe* 267; **to his** ~ appropriate to his purpose *Pe* 508

purpre *adj* purple, violet *Pe* 1016, *C* 1637; *n* purple fabric *C* 1568, 1743

pursued *pa* proceeded, made his way *C* 1177

puryte *n* purity, cleanness *C* 1074

pyes *n pl* magpies *C* 1465

pyght *pa and pa ppl* (*of piche*) set *Pe* 117&; decorated, studded *Pe* 192, 217, 229, 768; filled *C* 83; ~ **in** was attached to *G* 1456, 1566; was set in *G* 1735; ~ ... **of** set with, adorned with *Pe* 205; ~ **to** adjoining *C* 785

pyked (1) *adj* spiked *G* 769

pyked (2) see **apyke**

pyled *pa and pa ppl* pillaged, plundered *C* 1270

pyleres *n pl* pillars, columns *C* 1271, 1479*

pynes *pres pl* pen, enclose *Pa* 79; *pa ppl* **pyned** penned, enclosed *G* 769*

pyonys *n pl* peonies *Pe* 44

pyty *n* pity *Pe* 355, *C* 396, *Pa* 282, 327, compassion *C* 232, *G* 654*; emotion, grief *Pe* 1206; piety, righteousness *Pa* 31*

quavande *pres ppl* shaking, palpitating *C* 324

quayle *n* quail *Pe* 1085

qued *n* bane, evil *C* 567, *Pa* 4

quelle *v* kill, slay *Pe* 799, *C* 324, 567, *G* 1449, 2109, *pa and pa ppl* **quelled** *Pa* 228, *G* 1324; quench, bring to nothing, dispel *G* 752, *pres* **quelles** *Pa* 4

queme *adj* pleasing, pleasure-giving *Pe* 1179, *G* 578, 2109
quenches *pres* dowses with water, extinguishes *Pa* 4
quene *n* queen *Pe* 415&, *C* 1351&, *G* 74&
quest *n* cry of hounds engaged in a hunt *G* 1150; chase, pursuit *Pa* 39*; **calle of a ~** bay to announce a quarry detected *G* 1421
quik(e) *adj* living *C* 324, *Pa* 387, *G* 2109; lively, fresh, active *C* 624, *G* 177; vivid *Pe* 1179*; *adv* earnestly, eagerly *G* 975; *as n* **all quikes** all living things *C* 567
quikken *subj* should arise *Pa* 471
quikly *adv* actively, vigorously *G* 1324; promptly *G* 1490
quoth *pa* said *Pe* 241 +
quoynt(e), koynt *adj* wise, skilled, accomplished *Pe* 690*, 889; skilfully made or fashioned *C* 1382, 1459, *G* 877, 999; of excellent quality *Pa* 417; exact, precise *G* 1525; smart, well dressed *C* 160*; pretty *C* 871; cf. **coyntly**
quoyntyse *n* skill, artistry, ingenuity *Pa* 39*, *C* 1287; subtlety of intellect *C* 1632; lore, arts *G* 2447; elegance of clothing, ornamentation or appearance *C* 1809; finery *C* 54
quyte *pres* reward, pay *C* 1632; repay *G* 2244, 2324; *2s* **quytes** requite, reward *Pe* 595

rabel *n* noisy crowd *G* 1899, 1703
race (*Norse-derived cognate of* **res**) onward rush, headlong course *Pe* 1167, *G* 1420; sweep (of sword) *G* 2076
rach *n* smallish scenting hound, also called *brach* *G* 1903; *pl* **raches** *G* 1164*, 1362, 1420, 1426, **braches** 1142, 1563, 1603, 1610; *gen pl* **rach mouthes** *G* 1907
rad *adj* frightened, alarmed *C* 1543, *G* 251
radde see **rede**
rad(ly) *adv* promptly, directly *Pa* 65 +
rafte see **reve** (2)
raght(e) see **reche**
rak *n* layer of clouds *G* 1695, group of storm clouds, storm *Pa* 176, *C* 433; *pl* **rakkes** storm clouds *Pa* 139
rake *n* path *G* 2144, 2160
rakel *adj* hasty *Pa* 526
ramel *n* refuse, waste matter *Pa* 279
ran see **renne**
rand(e) *n* strip of land: **strothe-rande** strip of marshy scrubland *G* 1710*; *pl* **randes** strips of land bordering water *Pe* 105
rankor *n* rancour *C* 756
rape *n* blow, stroke *C* 233
rapely *adv* quickly *Pe* 1168, **~ I rave** I am quick to go off course *Pe* 363; busily *G* 2219

rapes *pres* hastens, hurries *G* 1903, *refl* *G* 1309

rasch *adj* hasty, impetuous *Pe* 1167

rased *pa* tore *G* 1907

rases *pres* rushes *G* 1461

rasores *n pl* razors *G* 213

rasped *pa and pa ppl* scraped, scored *C* 1545, 1724

rasse *n* clear space: ledge, plateau *C* 446; inlet of level ground *G* 1570*

ratted *part adj* ragged, torn *C* 144

rave *v* stray, deviate *Pe* 665; make mistakes *Pe* 363

ravyste *pa ppl* carried away in spirit, transported *Pe* 1088

rawes *n pl* hedgerows *G* 513; places where trees and shrubs grow *Pe* 105

raxled *pa* stirred, came to *Pe* 1174*

ray *n* beam of light *Pe* 160

rayke *v* go, set off *C* 671; *pres* **raykes** goes, sets out *Pa* 89; **raykes** *him* proceeds *C* 465; *imp* **rayke** go *Pa* 65, *pl* (*polite*) **raykes** go, set out *G* 1076; *pres ppl* **raykande** moving, proceeding *Pe* 112, *C* 382; *pa* **rayked her** proceeded, *G* 1735; **out rayked** went into the open *G* 1727

rayled *pa ppl* spread *G* 952, bestrewn *G* 745*; set, mounted, displayed *G* 163, 603

rayn *n* rain *C* 440, 953, 959, *G* 506

rayne (1) *n* rein *G* 2177; *pl* **raynes** *G* 457

rayne (2) *v* rain *C* 354; *pres ppl* **raynande** raining *C* 382

rayn-ryfte *n* rain-channel *C* 368*; cf. **lake-ryftes**

rayse *v* **your lif to ~** to raise your soul from death *Pe* 305; *pa and pa ppl* **raysed** raised *G* 1916, bade to rise *G* 821

rebounde *pa* sprang, bounded *C* 422

rech *v* reckon, care; *pres* **reches** *C* 465; *pa* **roghte** *Pa* 460; **rech I never for to** I don't care if I *Pe* 333

rechatande *pres ppl* blowing the hunting horn (to announce location of hunt) *G* 1911; *pa* **rechated** *G* 1446, 1466

reche (2&3s *pres* **reches**; *pa and pa ppl* **raght(e)**, 2s **raghtes**) give, grant, tender *C* 1369, *G* 66, 1804, 2059, 2324; held out to *G* 1817, gave, conferred upon *C* 561, *G* 1874, 2297; delivered, handed over *G* 1874, 2351, **raght is** has been handed over to *C* 1739; receive, get *C* 1766 (*subj*); reach, get to *C* 890; proceeded *C* 766, **reche after** go for, seek after *C* 619, **~ to** get as far as, succeed in reaching *C* 906, be equal to *G* 1243*; extends, falls *G* 183; reached, extended *C* 1691; **raght out** reached out *G* 432

reches see **rech** and **reche**

rechlesse *adj* carefree, uninhibited *G* 40

recorde *n* attestation, recorded testimony *Pe* 831

recordes *pres* records (in writing) C 25; *pa* **recorded** rehearsed G 1123*

recoverer *n* relief, shelter C 394, *Pa* 279

red(e) *adj* and *n* red *Pe* 27 +; (of gold) *Pe* 1111, G 663*, 857, 1817

rede *v* (*pa* **radde** (**red** C 194), *pl* **redden**) read *Pe* 709, C 1555, 1596; advise(d) *Pe* 743, *Pa* 406, G 363, decided; counsel, direct, guide G 738, *subj* C 1642*; interpret C 1578, 1633; have one's way G 2111*;

redes (2*s pres*)/**reden** (*pres pl*) **him right** give him what he asks for C 1346, G 373*; *pres pl* **reden and syngen** read and chant divine service C 7; *pa ppl* **redde** stated, pronounced G 443

redily *adv* readily G 373, 2059, quickly G 1821, 2324, exactly G 392, certainly C 105*

redles *adj* without recourse, desperate of remedy C 969, 1197, 1595; **for** ~ out of helplessness; as *n* **tho** ~ those unable to help themselves *Pa* 502

redy *adj* ready *Pa* 98, prompt in response *Pe* 591; eager C 724, zealous C 294; prepared C 345; ~ **to manne** ripe for mating C 869*; *adv* promptly, readily G 1970

refet *n* refection, nourishment *Pe* 1064

refete *v* nourish, restore strength *Pe* 88; *pa ppl* **refete** fed *Pa* 20

reflayr *n* fragrance *Pe* 46; **rose** ~ fragrance of rose C 1079

refrayne *v* check, restrain C 756

reghtful *adj* upright, righteous C 724; cf. **right(e)**

regioun *n* realm *Pe* 1178; region C 760, 964, *Pa* 298; *pl* **regiounes** *Pa* 344

regne *n* realm, kingdom *Pe* 501, 692, C 1642, 1652, 1739; royal power, sovereignty C 1334, 1734; cf. **rengnes**

regretted *pa ppl* bewailed, wept over *Pe* 242

rehayte *v*¹ address in such a way as to sustain or cause good cheer, speak encouragingly to C 127; *pa* **rehayted** G 895; *hunting* cheered on, encouraged G 1422

rehayted *pa* (of 'rehayte' *v*²) rebuked, reproached G 1744

reherse *v* set out, describe G 1243; *pa ppl* **rehersted** rehearsed, recited G 392

reken (1) *adj* fine, splendid *Pe* 5, 92, 906, C 1082; fair, becoming C 756; good, worthy C 738

reken (2), **rekenly** *adv* finely, splendidly G 39; worthily, with propriety C 10, 1318, G 2206*; graciously C 127, nicely, respectfully, courteously G 251, 821

rekken *v* recount, relate *Pe* 827; ~ **up** add together, list C 2

rele *imp* lay about us G 2246*; *pres ppl* **relande** reeling *Pa* 270; *pa* **reled** reeled, rolled *Pa* 147; swerved G 1728; (of eyes) rolled, cast, threw G 229*, 304

relece *v* legally release, remit G 2342*, grant remittance of penalty to

reles *n* cessation, intermission *Pe* 956

relusaunt *adj* reflecting light, resplendent *Pe* 159

relygioun *n* religious creed, church C 1156; **renkes of** ~ men of the Church C 7

relykes *n pl* sacred objects of value and/or antiquity, Church treasures C 1156, 1269

reme (1) *n* realm *Pe* 448, 735, C 1572; *pl* **remes** realms, domains C 1316; cf. **ryalme**

reme (2) *v* cry out *Pe* 1181; *pres pl* **remen** cry out, wail *Pe* 858

remembred *pa refl I* ~ **me** I remembered *Pa* 326

remnaunt *n* remaining persons C 433, 738; remaining part or quantity *Pe* 1160, G 2342*, 2401

remorde *v* recall with remorse G 2434; *pa ppl* **remorde** afflicted with mordant pain *Pe* 364

remue *v* remove, take away *Pe* 427; move, depart *Pe* 899; alter, change G 1475; *pa ppl* **remued** removed C 646, exiled C 1673

renay *pres pl* refuse G 1827; *pa and pa ppl* **renayed** rejected, refused C 105, *Pa* 344, G 1821

renden *v* tear, rend *Pa* 526; *pres* **rendes** splits G 1608; *pa* **rent of** tore off G 1332; *pa ppl* **rent** rent, torn C 40, 144, 1595 (**rended**), wounded, maimed *Pe* 806

rengnes *pl imp* reign C 527; *pa and pa ppl* **rengned** reigned C 1321; **in ... rengned** lived according to C 328*

renischche see **runisch(e)**

renk *n* man *Pa* 216 +; *pl* **renkes** men C 7 +; *gen* **the renkes selven** the man's self, the man himself C 786

renne *v* run C 527, G 1568; go speedily on foot *Pa* 52*; gallop C 1392; *pres* **rennes** prevails *Pa* 514, flows G 731, 1570; *pl* **rennen** run C 1514; **rennes of** (fame) spreads, is current G 310, 2458; *pres ppl* **rennande** running, sliding G 857; *pa* **ran** *Pe* 646, 1055, C 797, *Pa* 378, *pl* **ran, runnen** C 391, 1208, 1269, 1782, G 66, 1420, 1703 **ran**; *pa ppl* **runne(n)** run *Pe* 874*, G 1727, **is runne** has run *Pe* 26, **be** ~ may have been run up *Pe* 523*

renoun *n* worth, excellence *Pe* 986, G 2458, 2519; honour, status G 231, 313; pomp G 2434; **of (rich)** ~ of great excellence, splendid *Pe* 1182, G 2045

renowles *pres pl* renew, are renewed *Pe* 1080

rent see **renden**

reparde *pa ppl* fenced off; **fro** ... ~ barred to *Pe* 611

repayre *v* be assembled, be present at a place *Pe* 1028; *pres* **repayres** G 1016

repreved *pa* reproached G 2269

requeste *n* request, petition *Pe* 281

require *v* ask as a request of *G* 1056

rere *v* rise *Pe* 160; *subj* **rere** raise, awaken *Pa* 188; *pres pl* **rerers** rise up *C* 1461; *pa and pa ppl* **rered** rose, rose up *C* 366, 423; raised, brought into being *G* 353; **rerd** raised *C* 873; **evermore rert** ? established for ever *Pe* 591*

res, resse *n* rush, impetus *Pe* 874; **in/on a** ~ in a rush *C* 1782, *G* 1164, 1899; cf. **race**

resayte *n* hunting station *G* 1168*

resayve *v* receive *G* 2076

rescove *n* rescue *G* 2308; **mas** ... ~ delivers *Pe* 610*

reset(te) *n* shelter, accommodation *Pe* 1067; refuge *C* 906

resoun *n* (a) rightness, sense of rightness *Pe* 52*; righteousness, justice *Pe* 665, *C* 328; **by** ~ rightly *G* 1344, 1804; (b) cause, reason *Pe* 268, *Pa* 191; meaning, signification *C* 1633; (c) speech, discourse *G* 227, 392; *pl* **resouns** words, statements *Pe* 716, *C* 184, 194, *G* 443; arguments (in favour) *C* 2

resounable *adj* just, fair *Pe* 523; just, righteous *C* 724

respecte *n in ~ of* in comparison with *Pe* 84

respite *n* reprieve *Pe* 644; stipulated interval before something is to take place *G* 297*

resse see **res**

rest(e) (1) *n* bed, place to sleep *C* 890, 1208, *G* 1223; repose *Pe* 858, *C* 1766, *G* 1990; ease *Pa* 279, restfulness *Pe* 1087

rest (2) *v* rest *Pe* 679*; **restes** *imp pl* rest *C* 619, pause *C* 906; *pres* is disposed, is *C* 738; *pa* **rest** came to a rest *C* 446, **rested** leant *G* 2331; *pa ppl* **rested** rested *C* 616

restay *v* pause *Pe* 437; *pa and pa ppl* **restayed** restrained, held back *Pe* 716, 1168, detained *G* 1672, checked *G* 1153

restles *adv* without pause *C* 527

reve (1) *n* reeve, estate-manager *Pe* 542*

reve (2) *v* forcibly remove *G* 2459; **my solace to** ~ deprive me of whatever gives me comfort *Pa* 487; *pa and pa ppl* **rafte** reft, forcibly removed, seized *C* 1142, 1431, 1739

revel (1) *n* revelry, festivity *C* 1369, *G* 40; song, dance, music accompanying a feast *G* 538; pride, defiance *G* 313*

revel (2) *v* spend (time) in revel *G* 2401

rever *n* river *Pe* 1055; *pl* **reveres** waterside fields *Pe* 105

reverence *n* reverence *C* 10, honour, respect, esteem *C* 1318, 1369, *G* 1243, 2206*

reverenced *pa* greeted respectfully *G* 251

rewarde *n* regard, esteem, standing *Pe* 604; return, repayment *C* 208; reward *C* 1346, *G* 1804, 2059

rewardes *pres* rewards *G* 1610*, *pl* **rewarde** *G* 1918

rewfully *adv* sorrowfully, with grief *Pe* 1181

rewled *pa* ~ **him** governed his behaviour C 294

Reynarde *proper n* Reynard (nickname for fox) G 1728, 1898, 1920;
gen **Reynarde** Reynard's G 1916

rich(e) (1) *adj* (of things) splendid, magnificent *Pe* 68 +, costly G 1827; (of buildings, cities, lands) great, grand C 216, 571, 786, 1073, 1159, 1197, 1223, 1514, G 243; (of colour, sound) rich, glorious G 952, 1470, 1916, 2036; (of words) glorious G 1744; (of persons: lords, magnates, etc) great, mighty C 1685 +, grand, high-ranking C 1299 +, wealthy C 51, 812, 878, G 1646; as *n* **riche** great man C 1321, great men C 1208, G 66, 362, rich people C 127; *super* **richest** mightiest, most powerful C 1217; greatest, most illustrious C 1572, G 1130

riche (2) (C 1411, G 159, 220, 879), **rich(e)ly** (C 1045, G 163, 308, 931) *adv* splendidly, impressively; vividly C 1045

riche (3) *v* (*pres* **riches**, *pl* **richen**; *pa* and *pa ppl* **riched**) arrange, make disposition G 360*, array G 1223; prepare *Pa* 101, dress C 10; adjusted, arranged G 2177*; made ready, prepared G 599, 2206*; *pres ppl* **richchande** making his way G 1898; *refl* directs his course G 8, made his way G 367, gets dressed G 1873, prepare themselves G 1130, turned himself G 303

ridlande *pres ppl* streaming C 953, *Pa* 254*

riftes *n pl* clefts C 964

rigge *n* back *Pa* 379, G 1344, 1608

right(e) (1) *n* right, justice *Pe* 496&, *Pa* 323, 493*; righteousness *Pe* 622, *Pa* 19; good reason C 1318*; **of** ~ true, trustworthy C 194; **by** ~ accurately C 1633, rightfully C 2, G 274, 1041, **with** ~ G 2346; *pl* **rightes** rights, claims G 2342; cf. **rightful**

right(e) (2) *adj* right *Pa* 43, true C 282, G 1703, 2343; (as opposed to 'left') *Pa* 514

right (3) *adv* well *Pa* 326, C 1346; exactly *Pe* 298 +; directly *Pe* 1055, fully G 1341, 2162; rightly G 373*; **rightes** exactly C 427

ripe *adj* ripe C 1045, G 522; sexually mature C 869

rise *v* (*pres* **ris**es; *subj* **rise**; *imp* **ris**) rise(s) *Pe* 191 +; rise to view *Pe* 103; *pa* **ros** (**ris**ed at end of alliterative line: C 509, 838, 971, 1203, 1778, G 1313) rose, arose *Pe* 437 +, *refl* G 1736

robbed *pa* and *pa ppl* plundered C 1142, 1156

robbores *n pl* plunderers C 1269

robborye *n* robbery C 184

roche (1) *n* cliff, crag G 2199*; *pl* **roches** C 537

roche (2) *adj* rocky, stony G 2294

rocher *n* stony hillside, cliff G 1432; *pl* **rocheres** G 1427, 1698

rode *n* rood, cross *Pe* 646, 705, 806, *Pa* 96, G 1949

roffe *n* roof G 2198; *pl* **roves** G 799

rof-sore *n* wound from a gash G 2346; cf. **ryfe**

rough(e) *adj* rough *Pa* 139, 147, *C* 382; hard-surfaced *Pe* 646, *C* 1545; rugged, wild *Pa* 254, 298, *G* 1432, 2162, 2166; crude, primitive *G* 2198, sturdy *C* 1724; spiky, gnarled *G* 2177; bristly, hairy *G* 953*, unflayed *G* 1608*; shaggy, dense *G* 745*; not allowing easy passage *G* 1898; *as n* roughness of sea *Pa* 144

roughly, roughlych *adj* grim, comfortless *C* 433*; (*of speech*) angry, unsoftened *Pa* 64

roghte see **rech**

rok *n* rocky eminence *C* 446; cliff or rocky bank bordering water *G* 1570, 2144; citadel, castle *C* 1514*; *pl* **rokkes** rocks, crags *Pe* 68, *Pa* 254, *G* 730

rollande *pres ppl* rolling, waving *C* 790*; *pa* **rolled** rolled *C* 423, *G* 428; hung loosely *G* 953

romaunce *n* (chivalric) narrative *G* 2521*

romes *pres* walks *G* 2198

rones *n pl* bushes, thickets *G* 1466

ronge see **ryngande**

ronk *adj* rich, flourishing *G* 513; (*of women*) blooming *C* 869; abundant *Pe* 844; fierce *C* 233; headstrong, willful, self-willed *Pe* 1167, *C* 455, 873; unrestrained *Pa* 490, incontinent *C* 760; *as n* **thurgh ~ of his wille** following the promptings of an unrestrained will *Pa* 298

ronkly *adv* fiercely, violently *Pa* 431

rop *n* rope *Pa* 150; *pl* **ropes** *G* 857

rores *pres* bellows, roars *C* 1543; *pa* **rored** *C* 390

ros see **rise**

rosted *pa ppl* roasted *C* 59, 959

rote (1) *n* root *Pa* 467; foot of tree *C* 619; root cause *Pe* 420; *pl* **rotes** roots *G* 2294

rote (2) *n* **by ~** with due form *G* 2207*

rote (3) *v* decompose, rot *Pe* 958; *pres* **rotes** *G* 528

rotes *n pl* rotes (stringed instruments of the harp family) *C* 1082

rothun *n* ?redness *C* 1009*

roum *n* room, space *C* 96

roun (1) *n* secret, secrecy *Pa* 514

roun (2) *v* whisper, speak or confer in private *G* 362; *pa* **rouned** breathed words *Pa* 64; *pres ppl* **rounande** whispering *Pe* 112

rounde *n and adj* round *Pe* 5, 657, 738, *C* 927, 1121; **on ~** around *C* 423, *Pa* 147; **Rounde Table** *G* 39, 313, 538, 905, 2458, 2519, **the Table** 2515

route *n* group of associated persons, entourage *Pe* 926; *pl* **routes** companies *C* 969, 1197; **on ~** in crowds *C* 1782

routes *pres* snores *Pa* 186; *pres ppl* **routande** roaring *C* 354

routhe *n* (a) grief, sorrow *Pe* 858; **~ to here** grievous to hear *G* 2204;

- (b) ruth, pity *Pa* 21, 284, 396, *C* 972; piteousness, occasion for pity *C* 233
- rove** see **ryfe**
- roves** see **roffe**
- rowe** (1) *n* row, line *Pe* 545
- rowe** (2) *v* row, use oars *Pa* 216, 218
- ruby** *n* ruby *Pe* 1007*; *pl* **rubies** *C* 1471
- ruddon** *n* redness *C* 893*
- rudede** *pa ppl* ruddied, made red *G* 1695
- rudnyng** *n* reddening *Pa* 139
- rue** *v* take pity *Pa* 176, 502; *impers v* **hit me rues** I regret *C* 290, *pa* **him rued** *C* 561
- ruful(le)** *adj* piteous, sorrowful, sad *Pe* 916; sorry, lamentable *G* 2076
- ruly** *adv* piteously *Pa* 96, *C* 390
- runisch(e)** see **ryngande**
- runische, renischche** *adj* (a) strange, foreign *C* 96, undecipherable *C* 1545*; (b) rough, decisive *G* 457; *adv* **runischly** (a) undecipherably, in the manner of a cipher *C* 1724; (b) fiercely *G* 304*, roughly *Pa* 191, *G* 432
- runne(n)** see **renne**
- rurd** *n* noise, sound *Pe* 112, *C* 390, *Pa* 64, 396, *G* 1149, 1698, 1916, 2219, 2337
- rusched** *pa* rushed *C* 368; made a rushing sound *G* 2204, 2219
- ruthes** *pres ~ him* rouses himself *G* 1558; *pres pl* **ruthen** rouse *C* 895*; *pa ppl* **ruthed of her rest** roused from their beds *C* 1208*
- ryal(le)** *adj* royal *Pe* 193, *G* 905, splendid, magnificent *Pe* 160, 191, *C* 786, 790, 1082, *G* 2036; *as n* royal city *Pe* 919
- ryally** *adv* royally, magnificently *Pe* 987, *C* 812, *G* 663*
- ryalme** *n* realm *G* 691; *pl* **ryalmes** realms, kingdoms *G* 310; cf. **reme** (1)
- ryalty** *n* royal state, pomp *C* 1321, 1371
- rybaudes** *n pl* knaves, wrongdoers *Pa* 96, *C* 873

rybbe *n* rib *G* 1356; *pl* **rybbes** *G* 1343, 1378
ryche *n* kingdom *Pe* 601, 722
rychess *n* great worth, richness *Pe* 26
ryd *v* free, extricate *G* 364; separate (combatants) *G* 2246; *pres pl* **ryde** ... *of* clear away *G* 1344*
ryf *adj* rife, abundant *Pe* 770, 844
ryfe *v* rive, split *C* 363*; *pres* **ryves** cuts *G* 1341; *pa* **rove** cut *G* 2346
ryg *n* storm *C* 354*, 382
ryght *pa* ~ **him** sat upright *G* 308*
ryghtwys *adj* righteous, virtuous *Pe* 675 +, right *Pa* 490; *as n* just man *Pe* 689
ryghtwysly *adv* correctly, rightly *Pe* 709
rynes *pres* strikes, pierces *G* 2290
ryng *n* ring *G* 1817, 1827; *pl* **rynges** rings *G* 857; links in chain mail *G* 580, 2018
ryngande *pres ppl* ringing, resounding *C* 1082, *G* 2337; *pa* **ronge** rang out *G* 2201, *pa pl* **runge** rang *G* 195, 931, 1427, 1698
rynging *vn* (the sound of) ringing (*C* 1513)
rypande *pres ppl* searching (*C* 592)
rype *adj* ripe (*figurative*) *C* 869
rypes *pres* ripens, reaches maturity *G* 528
ryve *adv* plentifully, profusely *G* 2046
ryves see **ryfe**

sacrefyce *n* (ritual) sacrifice *Pe* 1064, *C* 507, 510, 1447*, *Pa* 239, 334;
in His ~ in ritual sacrifices to Him *C* 1497
sad(de) *adj* solemn *Pe* 887, *C* 595, composed *Pe* 211; serious *C* 640;
hard, stern *C* 525*; weighty *C* 1286*; considerable, great *C* 657
sadel (1) *n* saddle *G* 164&; *pl of* **sadeles** out of (their) saddles *C* 1213
sadel (2) *v* saddle *G* 1128, 2012
sadly *adv* sedately, calmly *G* 437; firmly *G* 1593; seriously, earnestly
G 1937; (*of sleep*) deeply *Pa* 442; to a considerable degree *G* 2409
saf *adj* safe *Pa* 334; spiritually saved *Pe* 672, 684, 696, 720, *comp*
saver morally and spiritually safer *G* 1202; **vouche ... saf**
vouchsafe, grant *G* 1390
saffer *n* sapphire *Pe* 118, 1002; *pl* **safyres** *C* 1469
sage *adj* wise, learned *C* 1576
saght *part adj* reconciled, at peace; **sette** ~ propitiate *Pe* 1199; **set ...**
~ put at peace, reconciled *Pe* 52
saghtelyng *vn* reconciliation *C* 490; ~ **makes with** makes peace with,
makes terms with *C* 1795
saghttel *v* make peace, be reconciled *Pa* 528; *pa* **saghtled** made his
peace *C* 230; calmed, was pacified *Pa* 232; settled, came to rest *C*

445; *pa ppl* **saghtled** reconciled, at peace with C 1139
sake *n* guilt *Pe* 800, *Pa* 84, 172; sake, behalf *Pe* 940, C 922, G 537, 1862, 2518
sakles *adj* guiltless C 716
sakred *pa ppl* consecrated C 1139
sale *n* the main hall of a castle or manor C 107&, G 197, 243, 349, 558, 1372, 1651
salt *n* salt C 823, 825, 997; *adj* C 984, 995, 999; *adj as n no* ~ nothing that is salty C 820
same *adj* same *Pe* 1099+; *as n of the* ~ of the same colour/material G 170, 881, with a matching second G 1640, cf. **of that ilk(e)**
same(n) *adv* together C 645, 1363, *Pa* 46, G 50, 940, 1318, 1345; **all** ~ all together C 400, 1291, G 673, 744, in common *Pe* 518, C 645, G 363
samen *v* (*imp pl* **samnes you**; *pa and pa ppl* **samned**) assemble(d), gather(ed) together C 53, 126, 361, *Pa* 385, G 1372; join with sexually C 870; merged G 659
samen-feres *n pl* travelling companions C 985*
sample *n* example, exemplum, parable *Pe* 499; *pl* **samples** illustrative instances C 1326*
sange see **songe**
sapience *n* sapience, wisdom C 1626
sardonyse *n* sardonyx *Pe* 1006; *pl* **sardiners** C 1469
sarre, sarrest see **sore** (2)
satted *pa* descended *Pa* 409
saudan *n* sultan, supreme ruler of an Eastern hegemony C 1323; *gen* **saudans** sultan's C 1364, 1388
saule *n* soul *Pe* 461+; *pl* **saules** C 332
Sauter *n* Psalter (a text of the Psalms) *Pe* 593, 672, 698 *Pa* 120
sauteray *n* psaltery C 1516
save *prep* except (for) C 409, 1749, *Pa* 182, G 2171; *conj* ~ **that** except that G 394, 2229
save(n) *v* save C 332, 336, 358, 388, 988, G 2039, *subj* should save C 900*; give salvation to *Pe* 674, *pres* **saves** 666, *pa ppl* **saved** C 992, G 1879, *subj* **save** G 2073, **so save me Dryhtyn** so may God save me G 1548
savement *n* safety, deliverance C 940
saver see **saf**; **saveres** see **savour** (2)
saverly *adj* sapient, comprehending *Pe* 226*; *adv* with relish, savouringly G 1937; comfortably G 2048
savour (1) *n* taste C 995; smell C 510, 1447
savour (2) *imp* understand, bring home (to yourself) C 581; *pres* **saveres** seasons C 825; *pa* **savoured** smelled *Pa* 275; *pa ppl* **savoured** flavoured, seasoned G 892

savyte *n* safety, freedom from danger C 489

saw(en) see **see**

sawe *n* speech, words *Pe* 226 C 109, 1609, 1670, G 1202, 1246;

saverly ~ **say** say anything testifying to real understanding *Pe* 226;

pl **sawes** words *Pe* 278, C 1545, *Pa* 67, G 341; statements C 1599, 1737

say(e) *v* (*pres* 2&3s **says**, *pl* **sayn**; *imp* **say**; *pa* and *pa ppl* **sayd(e)**; *pa pl* **sayden**) say(s), said *Pe* 3 +, spoke G 2126, tell *Pe* 391, C 139, 1552, ask C 1112; *refl* **sayd him** said C 853; cf. **segges**

sayl *n* sail *Pa* 151, 218, C 420

saylande *pres ppl* ?flowing G 865; *pa* **sayled** sailed *Pa* 301

saym *n* grease *Pa* 275

sayn see **say(e)**

sayned *pa* and *pa ppl* blessed C 746, 986; *refl* ~ **him/himself** crossed himself G 761, 763, 1202

Saynt (1) *n* and *adj* saint *Pe* 457, 788, 818, G 774, 1021, 1644, 1788; *pl* **sayntes** holy ones *Pe* 835

saynt (2) *n* (length of silk forming) girdle, belt G 589, 2431*

scale *n* outer surface *Pe* 1005

scape *v* escape C 62, 928, *Pa* 155; *pa* **scaped** C 529; cf. **ascaped** and **eschaped**

scarres *pres* scatters, drives off C 598; *pa* **scarred on** flung up to C 1784*; *pa ppl* **scarred** alarmed C 838

scathe *n* harm, evil C 21&, G 2353; disaster C 600; **hit is** ~ it is a shame G 674

scathel *adj* harmful, presenting a threat *Pa* 155

scayled *pa* scaled, climbed by ladder over C 1776

schadden see **schede**

schade *n* shade, shadow *Pa* 440

schaded *pa* cast a shade *Pa* 442

schadow *n* shade C 605

schaft *n* shaft, spear G 205; arrow-shaft G 1458, axe-shaft G 2332; beam of light *Pa* 455; *pl* **schaftes** shafts of light *Pe* 982

schafted *pa* ?sent out low beams of light G 1467*

schal(e) *pres* (2s **schal(t)**; *pl* **schal**, **schulen** (**schyn** C 1435, 1810, G 2401)) auxiliary forming predictive or non-volitional future shall *Pe* 283 +, must *Pe* 328 +; shall be G 1544; is/am/are to *Pe* 564, *Pa* 472, G 389; are about to, are going to *Pe* 265, 298, 315; *pa*: see **schuld(e)**

schalk *n* man *Pa* 476, C 1029, G 160, 424, 1776, 2268, 2372; attendant G 2061; *pl* **schalkes** C 762, G 1454

schame *n* shame C 1115, G 2372, 2504, shamefulfulness C 597; embarrassment C 850; indignation at imputed shame G 317*; **for** ~ shame on you G 1530

schamely *adv* shamefully, ingloriously *Pa* 128

schames *pres* feels shame *C* 580; *pa* **schamed** was embarrassed *G* 1189

schankes *n pl* shanks, legs *G* 160, 431, 846

schap *n* shape, form *C* 1121; *pl* **schappes** forms, designs *C* 1460

schape *v* happen, occur, come about *Pa* 160, *G* 1210*; arrange, ordain *C* 742, *G* 2138; address myself, take steps *C* 762; *pres* **schapes** forms, produces *G* 1626; *pa* **schaped**, **schop** brought about *Pa* 247; prescribed, provided *G* 2328, 2340; *pa ppl* **schapen** portrayed, drawn *G* 662, designed *G* 1832, constituted *G* 213

schaped *pa ppl* mounted, trimmed *G* 1832*

sharp(e) *adj and adv* sharp *G* 213, 269, 1331, 1337, 2267; keen, intense *C* 850, 1310; piercing(ly) *Pe* 877, *C* 840; swift *C* 475; *as n* blade *G* 424, 1593, 1902, 2313, 2332

schaved *pa pl* scraped *G* 1331; *pa ppl* **schaven(e)** scraped smooth *C* 1134, *G* 1458; planed

schawe *n* grove; thicket *Pa* 452; ~ **side** edge of a grove *G* 2161

schede *v* shed, depart *Pe* 411*; (of rain or snow) *pres* **schedes** *G* 506, 956 falls, *pa pl* **schadden** *G* 727 fell; *pa* **shed(e)** shed *Pe* 741; parted, severed *G* 425; fell *C* 1690

schelde *n* shield *G* 205&; *pl* **scheldes** tough hide at shoulders of a boar *G* 1456; slabs of boar's flesh *C* 58, *G* 1611*, 1626

schemered *pa* shone, glittered *G* 772

schende *v* destroy *C* 742, *G* 2266; inflict punishment *C* 519; *pa ppl* **schendede**, **schent** wrecked *Pa* 246; ruined, destroyed *C* 580, *Pa* 476; beaten, punished *Pe* 668, *C* 47, executed *C* 1029

schene *adj and adv* bright(ly) *Pe* 80, 203, *C* 170, *G* 2314, fair(ly) *Pe* 42, 1145, *C* 1076, 1310; *as n* **that** ~ that fair one *Pe* 166, 965, **the** ~ the bright (sun), the glare *Pa* 440, the bright weapon *G* 2268

schent see **schende**

schep *n* sheep *Pe* 801

schepon *n* shed for cattle or sheep *C* 1076

schere *v* cut *G* 213; (of gold) cut into threads for *fil d'or* *Pe* 165*; *pres* **scheres** sheers, swerves *Pe* 107; *pa pl* **schere** cut *G* 1337; *pa ppl* **schorne** cut into fine threads *Pe* 213; cut through *G* 1378

schet *pa ppl* shut, enclosed *Pa* 452

schewe *v* (*pres* **schewes**, *pl* **schewen**; *pa and pa ppl* **schewed**) show(s), display(s) *Pe* 1210, *G* 1378, 1526, 1626, showed, shown *Pe* 692, *C* 919, 1310, 1805, reveal(ed) *C* 600, 1626, *G* 2256, 2498, **sawes to** ~ to reveal the meaning of utterances *C* 1599; make known *G* 27, **thee to schewed** declared to you *C* 662; exhibit(ed) *C* 122, 1117; appear *G* 507, be revealed or exposed *G* 420; make an appearance, enter *C* 553; *reft* show themselves, appear *C* 170; seen *C* 250, be seen *G* 2036; met the eye *G* 885; was visible *C* 791, having

been seen *G* 315; brought *G* 619*, 2061; confess(ed) *G* 1880, 2504; utter *C* 840; provide, put on *C* 122
schine *v* shine, shine bright *Pa* 456, *C* 1115; *pres s and pl schines* *Pe* 28, 1074, *C* 1121; *pres ppl schinande* shining *G* 269, 772; *pa schon* *Pe* 166, 213, 982, 1008, 1057, *G* 956, **schinde** *Pe* 80, **schined** *C* 1532
schip *n* ship *Pa* 98, 108, 246
scho *pron* she *Pe* 758, *G* 979, 1259
schon see **schine**
schonied *pa* fled, eschewed *C* 1101
schop see **schape**
schor *n* shower, downpour *C* 227; *pl schowres* *G* 506
schore *n* steep slope(s) bordering water *Pe* 107*, 166, 230 *G* 2161; *pl schores* *G* 2083; **upon** ~ aslope, aslant *G* 2332
schorne see **schere**
schort *adj* short *G* 966
schort(ly) *adv* precipitately, without deliberation *C* 519; promptly *C* 742; plainly *C* 600; short *Pa* 128
schote *v* shoot, send missiles *G* 1454; *pa schot(te)* shot *Pa* 128; sprang *Pe* 58, *C* 850, *G* 317, 2318, spurted *G* 2314; *pa pl schotten* shot (arrows) *G* 1167
schout *n* shout, cry *C* 840
schowres see **schor**
schowted *pa* shouted itself out *Pe* 877
schowve *v* thrust (with a weapon) *G* 205; *pres schowves in* enters in *G* 2161, *pl schowven to* press forward *G* 1454; *pa and pa ppl schowved* shoved, thrust, pushed *C* 44, 1029, 1740, *Pa* 246, pushed their way *G* 2083
schrank *pa* sank *G* 425, 2313; shrank, flinched *C* 850, *G* 2267, 2372
schrewe *n* evil person, miscreant, cur *Pa* 197, *G* 1896; *pl schrewes* villains, wrong-doers *Pa* 77, *C* 186
schrewedschyp *n* wickedness, depravity *C* 580
schrof *pa* ~ **him** confessed *G* 1889
schroude *pa ppl* draped, decorated *C* 1076*
schrowde *n* clothing *C* 47, 170
schryfte *n* shrift, the sacrament of confession and penance *C* 1115, 1130, 1133
schrylle *adj* shrill *C* 840; *adv* shrilly, piercingly *Pe* 80*
schuld(e) (*pl schulde(n)*) *pa* (of **schal**) should, would *Pe* 186 + ; was to *G* 1286, 1752, 2075, 2076, 2244 were to *C* 61, 934, *G* 1692, had to *G* 1671, 2084; came to *C* 1107, *G* 2501, 2504, was due to, was about to *Pe* 1162, *G* 1902, were about to *C* 671; ought to *Pe* 153, *G* 248, 931; would normally *C* 249, 1077, *Pa* 462; could *C* 152, *G* 1816; am to, are to *C* 1110, 1112, *G* 398; **as ... schulde** as if ...

were -ing G 2201 +

schulder *n* shoulder C 981, G 1930, 2061; *pl schulderes* Pe 214, C 1690, G 156, 181, 1337, 2267, 2314, 2318

schulen see **schal(e)**

schunt (1) *n* jerk G 2268*

schunt (2) *pa* drew back, recoiled G 1902, 2280; *pa ppl was schunt* had retreated C 605

schylde *v* shield, protect *Pa* 440; prevent, forbid *Pe* 965; *subj God schylde* God forbid G 1776

schym *adj* shining, lustrous *Pe* 1077*

schymeryng *vn* a shimmering, a glittering *Pe* 80

schyn see **schal(e)**

schyndered *pa* split, shattered G 424, 1458, 1594

schyr(e) *adj and adv* bright(ly) *Pe* 28 + ; brightly coloured *Pe* 42; shining *Pe* 213, C 605; (*of facial complexion and flesh*) fresh, clear G 317, gleaming G 425, 1378, 2313; *as n the/that ~* the gleaming flesh G 1331, 2256; *comp adv schyrer* brighter, more brightly *Pe* 982, G 956; cf. **skyre**

schyre-wykes *n pl* loins C 1690*; cf. **wykes**

schyrly *adv* completely G 1880

scole *n* drinking vessel C 1145

scoleres *n pl* scholars, learned men C 1554

scomfyted *pa* threw into confusion, dismayed C 1784; *pa ppl scomfit* confused, disconcerted C 151

scorne *n* scorn C 827; *v pa scorned* C 709

scowt-wach *n* watchmen C 838

soymus *adj* 'squeamish', fastidious C 21, 598; *~ of* innately revolted by C 1148

scrape *v* paw the ground G 1571; *pa ppl scraped* incised, scraped in C 1546

scrof *adj* ?sharp C 1546

scrypture *n* writing, letters *Pe* 1039, C 1546

se see **see** (2)

sech(e) *v* seek *Pa* 97, G 266, 395, *subj sech(e)* *Pe* 354, seek out C 1615, *Pa* 53, *subj sech(e) to* let him seek out C 1130; search for C 454, 471, 482, 1559, G 549, 2s **What seches thou** what are you after *Pa* 197, 3s **seches** looks for C 469, 478; arrive at C 29; **sech to** go to G 1052, *~ after* travel towards C 420; *pa and pa ppl*: see **soght(e)**

secunde *adj* second *Pe* 652, 1002

sede *n* seed *Pe* 34; seed time C 523; female seed thought to be the equivalent of sperm C 660; male and female seed as reproductive potential C 336, 358; *pl sedes* seeds G 517

see (1) *n* sea *Pa* 140&

see (2) *v* (**sene** G 712) see *Pe* 96 + ; look at C 125, 262, G 2433; watch over, take care of C 988; *inflected inf on to sene* to look upon *Pe* 45; *pres pl sye* *Pe* 308, G 83, 200; *imp se* C 661, 1225; *pa and pa subj saw* *Pe* 158 + , **sy** *Pe* 1033, *pl sawen* G 1911; *pa ppl sene* seen *Pe* 164 + ; *part adj* visibly seen *Pe* 787; clear G 341, apparent, evident *Pe* 1143, C 1169, G 468; visibly G 148

sege *n* seat, throne *Pa* 93; siege C 1185, G 1, 2525

segge *n* man *Pa* 301 + ; (*in address*) G 394; *gen segge* man's G 574; *pl segges* men C 1401&, G 673&; *gen pl segges* men's C 515

segges *v* (*south-western variant of 'says'; used at line ending*) C 621

sekke *n* sackcloth *Pa* 382

seknesse *n* (*figurative*) spiritual malady C 1078

selcouth *n* wonder, marvel; miracle C 1274

selden *adv* seldom, rarely *Pe* 380, G 499

sele *n* well-being *Pa* 5, 242, 296; prosperity, profit G 1938; good fortune G 2409; gifts, blessings G 2422

self, selve(n) *adj and n* self, same *Pe* 203, C 660, 1769, G 751; oneself C 579; **the self/selve God/sunne/chapelle** *etc* the sun itself, God Himself, that very chapel *etc* *Pe* 1046, 1076, C 1418, G 2147; **the burne selven** that man, the man himself G 2377, *similarly (the ...) selven* C 243, 1068, 1399, 1745; *with gen the renkes/burnes selven* the man himself C 786, G 1616, **Godes self** *Pe* 1054, G 2156, **Crystes selven** G 51, **thyn owen selven** G 2301

sellen *pres pl* sell C 1038; *pa sold* *Pe* 731

sellokest see **selly** (2)

selly (1) *n* wonder, marvel *Pa* 140, G 28, 475; *pl sellyes* G 239

selly (2) *adj* wondrous, remarkable *Pa* 353, G 2170; *super sellokest* most prodigious G 1439; **sellyly** wonderful, lovely G 1962*

selly (3), **sellyly** *adv* wondrously, very G 963, 1194, 1803

selure *n* cloth canopy (over a throne) G 76

selve(n) see **self**

sely *adj* blessed, fortunate, happy *Pe* 659; innocent C 490

semblaunce, semblaunt *n* countenance *Pe* 211, 1143, expression C 640; bearing, behaviour G 1273*; external appearance G 468, visible form G 148; friendly bearing C 131, signs of favour G 1658, 1843

semble *n* assembly, group C 126, G 1429

sembled *pa ppl* assembled, brought together *Pa* 177; cf. **assemble**

seme (1) *n* seam, juncture; **in** ~ at the opening (of a scroll or book); mark of a wound C 555*; *pl semes* stitches, stitchwork G 610*, 2028

seme (2) *adj* seemly, comely *Pe* 1115, C 549, 1810, G 1085; *adv* becomingly, gracefully *Pe* 190

semed see **semes**

semely (1), **semlyche** *adj* comely, fair *Pe* 34 + ; fine, goodly *Pe* 789, *C* 262, 1299, *G* 685; seemly, fitting *G* 348, 1198; *as n* **that semely** that goodly one *C* 1055, *G* 672, **tho** ~ those comely women *C* 870; *comp* **semloker** more comely *C* 868, *G* 83

semely (2), **semlyly**, **semlyche** *adv* finely, beautifully *C* 1442, *G* 888; becomingly *G* 622, 865, 882, 916; sweetly, prettily *G* 1658, 1796

semes *pres* it beseems, it is fitting *G* 679; seems to be *G* 1827, 1847; *pa* **semed** seemed *C* 416, *G* 201, 235, 802, 866, 872, 948, *subj* *Pe* 760; appeared *C* 117; was apparent *G* 1551; looked *G* 840*; beseemed, became *C* 793, *G* 848, was fitting *G* 73, 1005; looked well *G* 1929

semloker see **semely** (1)

semlyche see **semely** (1) and (2)

sendal *n* a costly fabric *G* 76

sende *v* (*pres* **sendes**, *subj* **sende** *C* 1811; *pa* and *pa ppl* **sende**, *2s* **sendes**) send(s), sent *Pe* 130 + , shall send *C* 353; sent agents *C* 780; *imp* send word *C* 1615

sene see **see** (2)

sengel *adj* alone *G* 1531

sengeley *adv* singly, apart *Pe* 8

sere *adj* different, various *C* 336, 358, 1418, *G* 124, 822, 889; distinct, separate *C* 507, *Pa* 12, *G* 1985; *as n* **fele** ~ many different ones *G* 2417; *adv* **in sythes** ~ on various occasions *G* 761; ~ **twyes** on two separate occasions *G* 1522, ~ **fyve sythes** five times on each occasion *G* 632

serely *adv* variously, distinctly *C* 117*, **serelyche** severally, on distinct occasions *Pa* 193

sergauntes *n pl* officers *C* 109, *Pa* 385

serlepes *adj* separate, distinct *Pe* 994; *adv* separately *G* 501

sermoun *n* utterance, assertion *Pe* 1185

sertayn *adj* certain; *adv* in very truth *G* 174; surely *Pe* 685

servage *n* servitude *C* 1257

servant, **servaunt** *n* servant *Pe* 699, *C* 631, 773, *G* 976, 1240, 1278, 1548, 1845, 1971; *pl* **servauntes** *C* 988, *G* 2139

serve *v* (*pres pl* **serven**; *imp pl* **serves** *C* 820; *pa ppl* **served**) serve(s), served *Pe* 554 + ; be of service to *C* 530, *G* 827; serve(d) at table *C* 120, 1146, 1449, 1505, *G* 135, supplied *G* 1640, supply/supplied with food and/or drink *C* 38&, *G* 61&; be equal or sufficient for a purpose *C* 750; **What serves** what is the use of *Pe* 331; *pa* **of ... served** provided with *G* 1640

served *pa ppl* (*shortened form*: see **deserve**) deserved *C* 1115, *G* 1380

servyce *n* service *G* 1246, 1985; liturgical service *G* 751, 940; provision of food to diners *C* 1401, *G* 130; **in** ~ **of** in the service (at table or altar) of *C* 1152; **the** ~ **while** for the duration of the

service G 940

sese (1) *v* take hold of G 1825; *pres* **seses** enters into legal possession of C 1795; *pa* **sese**d took possession of C 1313; took hold of G 822, 1083, 1330, 2407; *pa ppl* **sese**d vested, put into legal possession Pe 417

sese (2) *v* cease, end C 523, *pa and pa ppl* **sese**d Pa 231, 369, G 1, 134, 2525; *imp pl* **seses** stop, prevent Pa 391

sesoun *n* time of year G 437, 516*, 1382, time of day G 1958, 2085; **high** ~ time of year in which a major feast day occurs Pe 39*; *pl* **sesounes** seasons C 523

set(te) *v* (*pres* **settes**, *pl* **setten**; *imp* **set**; *pa* **set(te)**, *pl* **set(en)**; *pa ppl* **set**) set(s) Pe 8+; set in place C 1449; created G 1318, instituted G 625, founds, founded Pe 1062, G 14; rate(d) Pe 307, 811, C 1710; made, rendered G 1883; appointed C 1364; ?assign, dedicate G 1246*; arranged Pa 193, disposed C 1226; deliver G 1937, (a blow) G 372*; **settes on** decides on C 469, **art set ... to** art resolved to Pa 487; placed C 986, 1015; seated C 37, 1401, G 1083, 1651*, *refl* **set(tes) her** seats/seated herself G 1193, 1479, **him set** seated himself, settled himself G 437; **set him** applied himself C 1453; **settes him out on ... even** makes right for G 1589

sete (1) *n* seat C 37, 92; throne C 176, 557, 1055, 1705, Pa 24; banquet C 59*; seat of residence C 1388; **to** ~ on his seat C 1395; to (their) seats G 72, 493; **in** ~ on (His) throne C 557

sete(n) (2) see **sitte**

sethe *subj* (should) boil C 631; *pa ppl* **sothen** G 892

seurte *n* safety, security Pa 58

sever *v* part G 1958, 1987; *pres* **severes** disentangles herself G 1797; *pa* **severed** broke G 2312

sewe (1) *n* stew, cooked sauce to accompany meat or fish G 892; food in sauce C 108; *pl* **sewes** sauces, dishes of meat or fish in sauce C 825, 1406, G 124, 889

sewe (2) *v* sew Pa 527, *pa* **sewed** Pa 382

sex-hundreth *adj* six-hundredth C 426

sexte *adj* sixth Pe 1007

seye *v* go G 1879; *pa ppl* **seyed** passed C 353, **seyen** arrived G 1958

side *n* side Pe 975+; part, direction G 2170, **on uch a ~ (of)** in all directions C 78, everywhere C 555, **on uche ~ of** all around C 228; *pl* **sides** sides Pe 198, 218, C 144, Pa 218, (of the body) Pa 374, (of an animal) Pa 302, G 1338, 1354, 1632, waist Pe 6*, G 152, 1830, **side** 589; slopes Pe 73; parts, regions C 956, 968

side-bordes *n pl* side tables (at a public feast) C 1398, G 115

sight(e) *n* sight Pe 226+, *pl* **sightes** Pe 1179, C 1722; **set toward ... her sight** turned their eyes towards C 672; **in sight(e)** manifest(ly) Pa 530, G 28; see **with/in sight** by eye C 192, with one's own eyes,

for oneself C 1710, G 226, seen by any eye G 197, set eyes on G 1705; **with sight of his iyen** with his eyes C 576

siker (1) *adj* trusty, doughty G 96, 111, 115, 2493; sure, certain G 265; secure G 2048; firm, veritable G 403; *adv* trustably G 1637

siker (2) *v* assure, promise G 394; ~ ... **trauthe** pledge faith G 1673

sikerly *adv* certainly, indeed Pa 301

sir *n* (unstressed form of **syre**) (in address) sir Pe 439, C 715, G 415, 477, 1035, 1050, 1056, 1091, 1481, 2366, 2395, **good sir** G 811, **beau sir** C 1622*, G 1222*, **sir swete** G 2237; (honorific preceding name) C 900, G 276, 552, 554, **Sir Gawan** G 377&

sithen *adv* then, afterwards, next Pe 643 +; **long** ~ long ago G 1440; *conj* because, since Pa 46, C 684, G 358, 1234, 2094; after C 557, G 1*, since the time that G 1642, 2524; cf. **syn**

sitte *v* (*pres* **sittes**, *pl* **sitte(s)**, **sitten**; *pa* **sat**, **sete**, *pl* **set(e)(n)**; *pa ppl* **seten**) sit(s), sat Pe 161 +; were seated Pe 835, C 1482, seated themselves C 829, G 1402; remain helplessly C 1257*; besits, impresses itself as C 550*, met the eye G 865

sive *n* sieve C 226

skarmoch *n* skirmishing, military encounters C 1186

skelt *pa* appeared, arose C 1186; ~ **hem** treated them C 827*; *pa pl* **skelten** appeared on the scene C 1554; *pa ppl* **skelt** raised C 1206

skete *adj* swift, energetic C 1186; *adv* swiftly G 19, suddenly, fiercely Pa 195

skowtes *pres* searches C 483*

skue *n* sky C 1784; **under** ~ through the air C 483*; *pl* **skues** skies C 1759, G 2167, **the ~ anunder** on the earth C 1206

skyfte *v* dispose, ordain Pe 569; *pa* **skyfted** altered, changed C 709, interchanged, alternated G 19

skyg *adj* inclined to shy away, nervily sensitive C 21

skylful *adj* well judging, discriminating, righteous C 1148

skylle *n* reason C 62, G 1296, 1509; logic, sense Pe 674, C 823, meaning C 1554; judgement, wits Pe 312, C 151; plan, determination C 569, 827; will, purpose C 709; *pl* **skylles** thoughts Pe 54

skyre *adj* (Norse-derived variant of **schyr(e)**) clear, shining C 1776

skyrtes *n pl* lower portions of a garment G 865; skirts or flaps of a saddle G 171, 601

slade *n* valley, river-valley Pe 141, 1148, G 2147; *pl* **slades** G 1159

slaght(e) *n* slaughter Pe 801, C 56; blow, stroke: **sleepyng** ~ sudden fit of sleep; *pl* **slaghtes of sorw** baleful onslaughts Pa 192

slake *v* die away, come to an end Pe 942; *pa* **slaked** died away G 244

slauthe *n* sloth C 178

slayn(e) see **slow**

sleght(e) *n* skill C 1289, G 1542, stratagem G 1858, sleight G 1854; *pl*

sleghtes skills, arts *Pa* 130, *G* 916; cf. **sleye**
sleke *v* quench *C* 708
slepe (1) *n* sleep *Pa* 200, 466, *G* 244, 1095
slepe (2) *v* sleep *Pa* 192, *G* 1734, 1746; *pres* **slepes** *Pa* 323, *G* 1686, 1731, 2007, *pl* **slepe** *Pe* 115; *subj* **slepe** *G* 1991; *pa* **slept(e)** *Pa* 292, 442, *G* 729, 1190; *pres ppl* **slepande** sleeping, in sleep *C* 1785
sleper *n* sleeper *G* 1209
slepyng *vn* ~ **slaght** sudden fit of sleep *Pe* 59
slete *n* sleet *G* 729
sleye *adj* skilfully or expertly made *G* 797, 893; *adv* **sleyly** furtively *G* 1182
sloberande *pres ppl* producing spittle *Pa* 186
slode see **slyde**
sloghe *adj* torpid, heavy *Pa* 466
slot *n* hollow at base of throat *G* 1330, 1593*
sloumbe *adj* sleepy, heavy *Pa* 186*, 466
slow *pa* slew, killed *C* 1221, *G* 1321; *pa pl* **slowen** *C* 1247, 1264; *pa ppl* **slayn(e)** slain *Pe* 805, *C* 55, 1785, *Pa* 84, 200, *G* 729, 1854, 1950
sluchchede *pa ppl* besludged *Pa* 341
slyde *v* slip in *G* 1209; *pres* **slydes** slides, moves smoothly *Pe* 77; *pa* **slode** *G* 1182*, **slydes/slode (up)on** falls/fell into, sinks/sank into (sleep) *Pe* 59, *Pa* 200, 466*
slyp *n* at a ~ ?at a stroke *C* 1264*
slyppe *v* slip away, escape *C* 1785; *pa and pa ppl* **slypped** sped from the bow *G* 1160, escaped, got away *G* 1858, ~ **by** sped on *C* 985, ~ **(up)on ... slepe** sunk into sleep *Pa* 186, *G* 244*
smach *n* odour *C* 461, 1019
smachande *pres ppl* smelling *C* 955
smal(e) *adj* small *Pe* 90; slender *Pe* 6*, 190, *G* 144; fine *C* 226; ~ **sendal** fine silk *G* 76
smart *adj* acid, biting *C* 1019
smartly *adv* clearly, concisely *G* 407*; hard, severely *C* 711
smelle *n* smell, odour *Pe* 1122, *C* 1019; **had the ~ of** got the scent of *C* 461
smeten see **smyte**
smethely *adv* (of a smile) calmly, quietly *G* 1789*
smoke *n* smoke *C* 955; *v pres* **smokes** forms a cloud resembling smoke *C* 226
smolt *v* slip away *C* 732*; *pres* **smoltes** slips, passes quickly *C* 461
smothe *adj* smooth *Pe* 6; amicable *G* 1763*
smothely *adv* without impediment, easily *C* 732*; fairly, well *G* 407
smyte *v* smite *C* 566, 711, *G* 2260, pierce *G* 205; *pa pl* **smeten into** fell into *G* 1763*; *pa ppl* **smyten** struck *G* 407

snaw(e) *n* snow C 222, G 956, 2003, 2088, 2315, **on snowe** snow-covered G 2234

so *adv* most, very *Pe* 74 + ; such *Pe* 95; to such an extent *Pe* 87 + ; thus *Pe* 97 + ; likewise *Pe* 467; *conj* as G 36; (*introducing a wish*) so may *Pe* 487, 850, G 387, 1055; ~ ... **as** (G 592), **as ... ~** (G 199) as ... as

soberly *adv* solemnly *Pe* 256, C 1497; seriously, earnestly C 799, *Pa* 334, G 1278, 2051; with appropriate seriousness G 940

sobre *adj* sober, serious, grave *Pe* 391, 532

sodenly *adv* without warning, suddenly, unexpectedly *Pe* 1095, 1098, 1178, C 910, 1769; precipitately C 201*

soft(e) *adj* (*of weather*) mild C 445, clement, not cold G 510*, 516; *comp* **softer** of softer material G 271

soft(e) *adv* softly *Pa* 469*, G 1687, 1929; comfortably G 1121: **softly** softly G 1193, 1479, with lowered voice C 822, G 915; meekly *Pa* 529*

soghe (1) *subj* cause suffering to *Pa* 391

soghe (2) *imp* sow, spread *Pa* 67

soght(e) *pa* and *pa ppl* (*of sech(e)*) sought *Pe* 730, C 201, 1282, G 1995, 2493, sought out, found *Pe* 518*; made one's way (to) *Pa* 249, C 1371, G 1284; **out** ~ issued G 1438, ~ **to** passed to C 940, made its way to C 563; ~ **to Him even** made its way right to Him C 510; ~ **fro** departed from *Pa* 116, G 685; **fro ... ~ was** had departed from G 1440*

sojorne *n* stay, sojourn G 1962

sojourned *pa ppl* lodged, stabled G 2048*, stayed as a guest G 2409

sokored *pa ppl* succoured, sustained, preserved *Pa* 261

solace *n* delight, happiness *Pe* 130 + ; **his** ~ the comfort he had afforded G 1985

solased *pa* gave happiness and comfort to C 131

solemne *adj* formal, ceremonial, ritual C 1447, *Pa* 165, 239; **on ~ wyse** in state C 1171

solemnete *n* ceremony; regal state, grandeur C 1678; formal feast C 1757; **with** ~ in a formal and dignified manner C 1313

solempnely *adv* with ceremony, in state C 37

solie *n* throne C 1171, 1678

somer *n* the warmer half of the year C 525, G 510, 516*; *pl* **someres** summers C 1686

somones *n* summons, express command C 1498

sonde (1) *n* sand, shore *Pa* 341

sonde (2) *n* that which is sent, message C 53, 781; **of Godes** ~ at God's sending, sent by God *Pe* 943

sondesmon *n* messenger C 469

sone *adv* soon *Pe* 537 + ; quickly C 1150 + ; at once C 501, 1059, 1649, G 1309, 1872, 1906; **ful** ~ after only a brief interval *Pe* 1078,

very quickly *G* 1289; *conj* ~ **so**, (**as**) ~ **as** as soon as *Pe* 626, *C* 219, 1550, *Pa* 232, *G* 864

sonet *n* melody *C* 1516; *pl* **sonetes** bells *C* 1415

songe (**sange** *Pe* 19) *n* song *Pe* 882, 888, 891, *C* 1080; *pl* **songes** *G* 1654

songe(n) see **synge**

sop *n* mouthful *C* 108; snack *G* 1035*

soper *n* evening meal *C* 107, 829, 997, 1763, *G* 1400, 1654

sore (1) *n* pain, grief *Pe* 130, 940, *Pa* 242; ~ **of** pain at the loss of *Pa* 507

sore (2) *adj* painful *G* 1793; bitter *G* 2116; wretched, evil *C* 1111; *adv* sorely *Pa* 495; hard *Pe* 550, *Pa* 140; bitterly *C* 290, 557, 1136; *comp adv* **sarre** more sorely *C* 1195; *super adj* **sarrest** most grievous *C* 1078

sorquydrye *n* pride *G* 311, 2480; overweening, arrogance, presumption *Pe* 309*

sorsers *n pl* sorcerers *C* 1579*

sorsory *n* sorcery, witchcraft *C* 1576

sortes *n pl* lots *Pa* 193

sorw(e) *n* sorrow *Pe* 352, *C* 563, 778, 1080, *Pa* 409, 480; repentance *Pe* 663; disaster, misery *Pa* 192, *G* 2383, 2415; curse, abuse *G* 1721; muck *C* 846, *Pa* 275; **for her owne** ~ to their own cost *C* 75

sory *adj* grieved *G* 1826, 1987

soth(e) (1) *n* truth *Pe* 482, 653, *G* 348, 355, 1786; troth *G* 1825, 2051; **for** ~ in truth *Pe* 21 +, for a truth *G* 403, 2359, indeed *G* 415, 1222; *pl* **sothes** truths *C* 1598, 1626

soth (2) *adj* true *Pe* 1185, *C* 515, 1643, *G* 1385, 1488, 1637, 2457; *adv* with truth *G* 84, undeniably *G* 2110

sothefaste *adj* true, genuine *C* 1491

sothen see **sethe**

sothfol *adj* truthful *Pe* 498

sothly *adv* truly, indeed *C* 299 +

sotte *n* fool *C* 581; *pl* **sottes** *Pa* 509

sotyle *adj* lacking density, fine, pure *Pe* 1050

soufre *n* sulphur, brimstone *C* 954, 1036

soughed, **swey** *pa* **soughed**, made a sighing, swooshing sound *Pa* 140; made the sound created by a roaring sea or a high wind *Pa* 429*

souly *adj* muddled, dirty *C* 168, 1111*

soumme *n* sum, number *Pa* 509, *G* 1321

soun *n* sound *C* 973; voice *Pa* 429; tone of voice *Pe* 532; talk, report *C* 689

sounande *pres ppl* sounding pleasingly, melodious *Pe* 883; *pa* **sounded** sounded *C* 1670

sounde (1) *n* good health, uninjured state *G* 2489

sounde (2) *adj* sound, healed C 1078; uninjured, undamaged C 555;
adv soundly, securely, thoroughly C 1795; wholesomely *Pa* 291

sounder *n* herd of wild swine *G* 1440

soundly *adv* soundly *G* 1991

souped *pa ppl* supped, eaten an evening meal C 833

sour(e) *adj* acrid C 1036; unattractive *G* 963, unsavoury, nasty C 192;
as n no ~ nothing that is sour C 820

soverayn *n* master, mistress *G* 1278; sovereign, monarch C 93; (*used of God*) C 178, 210*, 552&, *gen* 1670, *Pa* 429, *as adj* highest ranking, supreme C 1454

soyle *n* soil, ground C 1039, *Pa* 443; **upon** ~ on the ground C 1387

space *n* space, extent *Pe* 1030; space of time; **in** ~ then, thereupon *Pe* 61; in due course C 1606, *G* 1199, 1418; at any time *G* 1503; **in that** ~ at that point *Pe* 438, *Pa* 365; **spied a** ~ seen an opportunity C 1774; **in** ~ **of** in accordance with C 755*

spak(ly) *adv* quickly, promptly C 755, *Pa* 104, 338

spakest *super adj* readiest, most ready-witted *Pa* 169

spakk see **speke**

spakly see **spak(ly)**

spare (1) *adj* sparing *G* 901*; clear, bare *Pa* 338*; (*nautical*) reserved for special purpose *Pa* 104*

spare (2) *v* desist, forbear C 755, 1245; spare from affliction C 776;
pres with ... spares spare from *Pa* 484*; *pa ppl spared* spared *G* 1935

sparred *pa sprang*, leapt *Pe* 1169, *G* 1444

spec *n* speck C 551

speche *n* speech, words *Pe* 37 +; discourse C 3; statement C 26; *pl speeches* remarks *G* 860, locutions, phrases *G* 1261, 1778

special *adj* excellent, precious *Pe* 235, 938; especially trusted, intimate C 1492*

specially *adv* particularly *G* 2093

specialte *n* special affection *G* 1778*

sped *n* success, prosperity, felicity *G* 918; efficacy, power C 1607; speed *G* 1444; **in a ~ while** in a very short time C 1285*

spede *v* (*pres spedes*) succeed(s) C 1058, prosper *G* 410; give(s) success to C 551, *G* 1292, 2120; further *G* 2216; be sufficient to cause C 551; *subj (in prayers) so God me ~* so may God prosper me, God help me *Pe* 487, **cros Cryst me ~** *G* 762; *pa speded* sped, hastened *G* 979

spedly *adv* efficaciously C 1729; effectively, in proper form *G* 1935

speke *v* speak, utter, say C 301, *G* 226, 308, 1859; *subj* *Pe* 422; *pres 2&3s spekes* *Pe* 594 +, *pl spoken* C 646, *G* 1117, **of spoken** speak of C 845, *G* 1242; *pa spakk* *Pe* 938, **speke(d)** *Pe* 438 C 1220, *G* 1288, 2461; *pa ppl spoken* *Pe* 291 +

spelle (1) *n* speech, words *Pe* 363, 793, *G* 209, 1199, 2184
spelle (2) *v* tell, speak *Pe* 793; *2s pres* **spelles** sayest *G* 2140
spend see **spenned**
spende *v* expend *G* 2113; ~ **no speche** say nothing *G* 410; *pa ppl*
speche spent spoken *Pe* 1132
spenne *n* patch of ground *G* 1709*, 1896; **in** ~ in the place *G* 1074
spenned, **spend** *pa and pa ppl* clasped *Pe* 49; fastened *Pa* 104, *G* 587;
spenned on firmly enclosed *G* 158
spenne-fote *adv* with feet together *G* 2316*
spent see **spende**
spere *n* spear *G* 269, 983, 2066, 2143; **a/twenty** ~ **lenthe** a spear's/
twenty spears' length *C* 1383, *G* 2316
sperred *pa* struck *G* 670*
spied see **spy**
spitous *adj* merciless, grim *G* 209; despicable *C* 845
spitously *adv* without mercy, ruthlessly *C* 1285; harshly, scornfully *C*
1220
spones *n pl* spoons *G* 886
spot *n* stain, blemish *Pe* 12&, *C* 551; place *Pe* 13, 25, 37, 49, 61; *pl*
spottes spots, stains *Pe* 945
spoyle *v* despoil, plunder *C* 1774; *pa* **spoyled** carried off by force *C*
1285
sprad see **sprede**
sprang see **spryng(e)**
sprede *v of ...* ~ flourish in *Pe* 25; *pres* **sprede** **in** is serially unfolded
in *C* 1565; *pa* **sprad** spread *Pa* 365, ~ **him within** was diffused in
him *C* 1607*
sprenged *pa* sprang, dawned *G* 1415*, 2009
sprent *pa* (of 'sprente') sprang, spurted *Pe* 1137, *G* 1896
sprit *pa* spurted, sprang *G* 2316
spryng(e) *v* come into being, be born *Pe* 453; become known, spread
C 1362; *pres ppl* **spryngande** sprouting, burgeoning *Pe* 35; *pa*
sprang sprang *Pe* 13, 61, *G* 670; (of words) came forth, were uttered
Pa 365, *G* 1778; **in sprang** lived in *C* 408*
spumande *pres ppl* foaming, forming a scum *C* 1038*
spured *pa and pa ppl* (of 'spire') questioned *G* 901, 2093; **that he ~**
him which he put questions to him about *C* 1606
spures *n pl* spurs *G* 158, 587*, 670
spyce *n* spice, spicery or spice-bearing plants *Pe* 104; (metaphorical)
precious person, sweet being *Pe* 235, 938; *pl* **spyces** spices *G* 892,
spice-bearing plants *Pe* 25, 35; spiced confections *G* 979
spye *v* look for, watch out for *G* 1896; observe, gather intelligence *C*
780; *pa and pa ppl* **spied** espied *C* 1774; made enquiries *G* 901,
2093; cf. **aspye**

spylles *pres* destroys C 511; *pa* **spylled**, **spylt** killed, destroyed C 1220; shed C 1248

spyrakle *n* breath C 408*

spyryt *n* spirit *Pe* 61; the Holy Spirit C 1607

spyseres *n pl* apothecaries C 1038

spyt (1) *n* act of malice, piece of cruelty *Pe* 1138; hostility C 755

spyt (2) *n* **boute** ~ without delay, at once G 1444*

stabeled *pa* put into stable G 823

stable *v* fix *Pe* 683; *pa* and *pa ppl* **stabled** fixed G 1060*; made secure, confirmed C 1334, 1652; set firmly in place C 1667

stad(de) *pa ppl* (of ‘stede’) placed, set C 90, 1506, G 33, 644, situated C 806; in the condition of C 983; furnished G 2137

staf (*dat* **stave**) *n* staff, pole G 214, 2137

stalked *pa* walked with care or deliberateness *Pe* 152, G 237; strode G 2230

stal(I)e (1) *n* place, position *Pe* 1002, C 1506, G 104, 107

stalle (2) *v* detain, hold in place *Pe* 182; hold back C 1184; *pa ppl* **stalled** set, installed C 1334; situated C 1378

stalworth(e) *adj* sturdy C 884, G 846; immoveable C 983; *super* **stal-worthe** C 255; *as n* **that swalworth** that stalwart man G 1659

stamyn *n* stem of ship, prow C 486

stanc *n* pond C 1018; *pl* **stanges** pools C 439

stande *v* (*pres* **standes**, *pl* **stand**, **stonden**; *pa* **stod(e)**, *pl* **stod(e)**, **stoden**; *pa ppl* **standen**) stand(s), stood *Pe* 182+, *refl* **Him stande** *Pe* 867; stand out, shine *Pe* 113; endure, bear G 294, 344; remained *Pe* 597; existed G 1768; **stod on** rested his feet on G 170; *pres ppl* **stondande alofte** projecting G 1818

stanges see **stanc**

stapled *pa ppl* secured with staples or metal pins G 606

stare (1) *n* sightedness, ability to see C 583*

stare (2) *v* stare, look fixedly; *pres pl* **staren** catch the eye, shine *Pe* 116; *pres ppl* **starande** shining G 1818; *pa* **stared** stared C 389; gazed C 787; shone, stood out C 1396*, 1506

start(e) *v* leap *Pe* 1159; leap aside G 1567, flinch G 2286; *pres* **startes** springs G 2063; *pa* **start** started, sprang G 431; **start astray** leap/leapt from one’s place *Pe* 1162, G 1716*

stave see **staf**

stayned *pa ppl* stained, coloured G 170

sted(de) *n* position, place C 389, 1378, G 2213, 2323; **in his** ~ in his place C 1334; **in** ~ in the place, there G 439

stede *n* steed, knight’s horse, charger G 176, 281, 670, 823; *pl* **stedes** G 260

steke (*strong counterpart of weak v* ‘stike’: see **stykes**) lock up, restrain C 754; *imp pl* **stekes** thrust C 157, ~ **yow** shut yourselves up C 352;

- pa* **stek** was fixed; **stek on** clung to G 152; **stek up** stopped up C 439; *pa pl* **steken** fastened C 884; *pa ppl* **stoken** barred, shut *Pe* 1065, G 782*, closed; confined, held in C 1199; locked up, locked in C 1524; shut in C 360; firmly embedded G 33; fixed (appointment) G 2194; **stoken of** packed full of G 494
- stele** (1) *n* shaft (forming) handle G 214, 2230; side of ladder *Pa* 513
- stele** (2) *n and adj* (made of) steel or hardened iron G 211, 426, 570, 575, 580
- stele** (3) *v* steal, creep *Pe* 20; *pres steles out* issues cautiously G 1710; *pa stel* stole, went quietly C 1203, G 1191; *pa pl stelen* stole into, secretly occupied C 1778; *part adj stollen* secret, stealthy C 706, G 1659*; cf. **astel**
- stele-bawe** *n* stirrup G 435*
- stele-gere** *n* steel trappings, armour G 260
- stemme** *v* pause C 905; *pa stemmed* paused from movement or speech G 1117*
- stemmed** *pa* pondered, cogitated G 230*
- stepe** (1) *n* sole of the foot, foot *Pe* 683
- stepe** (2) *adj* bright *Pe* 113, C 583; *adv* brightly C 1396*
- steppes** *pres* steps G 435, 570, 2060; *pres pl steppen* walk *Pa* 402; *pa stepped* G 1191
- stere** *v* steer, have in charge *Pe* 623; restrain *Pe* 1159; control *Pa* 27
- sternes** *n pl* (Norse-derived variant of **sterres**) stars *Pe* 115, *Pa* 207
- sterres** *n pl* stars C 1378
- steven** (1) *n* voice C 770, *Pa* 307, G 2336, spoken word(s) C 1524, *Pa* 73, G 242, cry *Pe* 1125, C 1203, 1778; sound, noise C 1402; **at** ~ vocally, verbally *Pe* 188
- steven** (2) *n* command, instructions C 360, 463; agreement, appointment, rendezvous C 706, G 1060*, 2008, 2194, 2213, 2238
- steward** *n* official in charge of the domestic affairs of a household C 90
- stif(fe)** *adj* strong, sturdy *Pe* 780, *Pa* 234, G 107&; firm G 34, 431, 846; solid, unmoving C 983; hard, difficult G 176; *super stifest* strongest, doughtiest C 255, G 260, *as n* G 1567
- stif(ly)**, **stiflyche** *adv* firmly C 157, 1652, G 104, 606, without moving G 294; securely C 352; sturdily, staunchly G 287; forcibly G 671, 1716
- stichtel** *v* stand against G 2137; *imp stichtel thee upon* hold yourself to, observe a limit of G 2252; *pres stichtles* presides G 2213; keeps (his) place G 104*; assigns *Pa* 402; *pa ppl stichtled* assigned lodgings C 90
- stik** see **stykes**
- stille** (1) *adj* calm, quiet *Pe* 20, C 1203, G 1996; covert, secret, secretive C 589, 706, G 1659; motionless, speechless C 1523; *comp*

stiller with less motion and/or sound *G* 301

stille (2) *adv* without motion *and/or* sound *Pe* 182*, 1085; *C* 936, *G* 1687, 1994, 2252, 2293; quietly, peacefully *G* 1367; docilely, with meek patience *C* 486, 497, submissively *Pa* 371, 402, *G* 2385; privately *G* 1085; stealthily *C* 1781, *G* 1188; for ever *Pe* 683*

stilly *adv* quietly *G* 1117, stealthily *C* 1778, *G* 1191, 1710; without ado, simply *C* 806

stirop *n* stirrup *G* 2060; *pl* **stiropes** *G* 170

stod(e)(n) (1) see **stande**

stode (2) *n* position, place *Pe* 740

stok *n* tree-stump: **by ~ or stone** at any landmark, anywhere *Pe* 380; *pl* **stokkes** blocks of wood *C* 1343, 1523, 1720; the stocks *C* 46, 157, *Pa* 79

stoken see **steke**

stollen see **stele** (3)

stomak *n* stomach *Pa* 274

stond- see **stande**

stone *n* stone *Pe* 380 +; stony ground *G* 2063, 2230; jewel *Pe* 206, 994, 1006; *pl* **stones** stones *Pe* 113, *C* 1343, 1523, 1720, rocky outcrops *G* 2166, stony ground *G* 2282; jewels *Pe* 997, *C* 1120, 1280, 1396, *G* 1738, 2027

stonefire *n* sparks struck from stone *G* 671

stone-hard *adv* very firmly *C* 884*

stonen *adj* made of stone *C* 995

stone-stille *adv* still as a stone *G* 242

stonge *pa* (of 'sting') stabbed, pierced *Pe* 179

stonyed *pa* stunned *G* 1291*

stoped *pa* closed (a watergate) *C* 439

store (1) *n* supply, great number *Pe* 847

stor(e) (2) *adj* strong, powerful *G* 1291*, 1923

stote *v* come to a halt, stop *Pe* 149

stounde *n* (a) moment, point of time *Pe* 20; *pl* **in/by stoundes** on occasions, at various times *C* 1603, *G* 1567; **in sely/waryed stounde(s)** in a blessed/cursed hour *Pe* 659, *C* 1716; (b) pang, shock *C* 1540; *pl* **delfulle stoundes** (*G* 1517), **wo-stoundes** (*Pa* 317*) painful throes, grievous passes

stouned *pa* were stunned with astonishment *G* 242; stunned, astonished *G* 301, 1291*; **~ his mynde** gave him a shock *Pa* 73

stout(e) *adj* valiant, doughty *Pe* 780, *C* 1184; sturdy, solid *Pe* 935; fine, excellent *C* 1343*, 1396; high in status, princely *C* 787

stoutly *adv* firmly *G* 1614, loudly *G* 1153, 1364, 1923

stowes *pres* provides lodging for C 480; *pa ppl stowed* found places for, seated C 113; stowed on board ship C 352, 357, 360

strakande *pres ppl* blowing (on a horn) G 1364*, 1923; *pa pl strake* sounded out, blew (on a horn or trumpet) C 1402*

strange, straunge *adj* not a resident of, or not native to, a certain place C 875, G 1028*; not one's own, adopted C 411; (*place*) remote, unfamiliar *Pe* 175, G 709, 713*; beyond normal bounds, extreme C 861, extravagant C 1494*

strates see **strete**

straunge see **strange**

stray (1) *adv* astray, off course *Pe* 179

stray (2) *v* move out of a set place or course; get out C 1199; *pa strayed* fell, slipped *Pe* 1173*

strayn *v* constrain, control *Pe* 691, G 176; *refl hem ... streny* exert themselves *Pe* 550; *pres straynes* (con-)strains *Pe* 128*; *pa strayed* crushed C 1540*; had in control, carried along *Pa* 234; cf. **constrayne**

strayt *adj* close-fitting G 152; *adv* narrowly, tightly C 880, 1199

strech *v* proceed, walk *Pe* 971, *imp pl streches* C 905; **myght on strech** could be located upon *Pe* 843

streght *adj* straight, direct *Pe* 691; 'stretched', taut G 152; propulsive *Pa* 234

strem *n* stream, any body of water with a current *Pe* 125, 1159, 1162; *pl stremes* streaming waters C 364, 37, *Pa* 162, currents *Pa* 234, 311

stremande *pres ppl* streaming out light *Pe* 115

strenthe *n* strength *Pe* 128, C 1667, *Pa* 395; force C 880, 1155, G 1496; political and/or military power C 1430

streny see **strayn**

stresse *n* distress *Pe* 124

strete *n* city street *Pe* 971, 1059, C 787, 806; *pl stretes* *Pe* 1025, C 77, **strates** *Pe* 1043

strike *v* strike G 287, deliver a blow G 331, 2099, 2305; ~ **thurgh** penetrate *Pe* 1125; *pres strikes* runs *Pe* 570; *pa strok out* struck *Pe* 1180, flew up G 671

stronde *n* stream *Pe* 142; *pl strondes* currents *Pa* 254

strong(e) *adj* strong *Pe* 531, C 1034, 1181, 1540, 1652, G 1618; solid, secure G 34; intense, grievous C 1227, *Pa* 305; *adv* strongly *Pe* 476; *comp as n the stronger* C 835

strot *n* contention, quarrelsomeness *Pe* 353, 848

strothe *n* marshy scrubland: **strothe-men** men who inhabit this (dank and dreary) world *Pe* 115*; **strothe-rande** strip of scrubby

marshland G 1710
strydes *pres* strides G 1584, 2232; ~ **aloft** mounts, gets astride G 435, 2060
strye *v* destroy C 307, G 2194; ravage; conquer C 1768; *pa* **stryed(e)** destroyed C 375, 1018; cf. **disstrye**
stryf *n* strife *Pe* 848, G 2369; contention, resistance G 2323; troubles, affliction *Pe* 248, 776
stryndes *n pl* streaming waters *Pa* 311
stryng *n* string *Pe* 91
strythe *n* ?stance G 846, 2305
stryven *pres pl* **agayns** ... ~ oppose, resist *Pe* 1199; *pres ppl* **stryvande** striving forward, driving *Pa* 311
studie *v* try to deduce G 230; *pa* **studied** fell into a study, were nonplussed G 237
study *n* deep thought G 2369
stuffle *n* padding G 581*
stuffed *pa ppl* padded, stuffed G 606; (*military*) supplied, manned C 1184
stures see **styry**
sturne *adj* brave, undaunted G 334; doughty, tough G 846, 2099, 2136; physically demanding, tough G 494; harsh, loud C 1402*; formidably solid G 143; as *n* **the** ~ the strong man G 214
sturnely *adv* stoutly, strongly G 331
stye *n* path *Pa* 402
styghe *pa pl* ascended, climbed C 389
stykes (*weak counterpart of strong v steke*) *2s pres* are set (as a jewel) *Pe* 1186*; *imp* **stik** set firmly C 157; *pa* **stykked** placed C 583
styngande *pres ppl* stinging, biting C 225
stynkes *pres* stinks C 577, *pres pl* **stynkes** C 847; *pres ppl* **stynkande** stinking C 1018
stynt(e) *v* desist C 1261; come to an end C 225, cease C 381; *pres* **styntes** ceases C 359; *subj* **stynt** cease from *Pe* 353; *pa ppl* **stynt** finished, ended *Pa* 73
styry *v* stir, show signs of life C 1720, *pa* **styryed** C 403; *pres* **stures** swings, brandishes G 331
stythly *adv* firmly, strongly G 431
sue *v* follow *Pe* 976; *pres* **sues** ensues G 510, pursues G 1562, *pl* **sue** follow, are in attendance on *Pe* 892; *pres ppl* **suande** pursuing G 1467; *pa* **sued** followed C 87, 681, G 501, pursued G 1705
suffer *v* (*pres* **sufferes**; *pa ppl* **suffred**) (a) allow, permit G 1967, bear patiently *Pa* 5*, 46, bear passively G 2040; (b) undergo *Pe* 940, C 716, 718, be/is afflicted *Pe* 954, *Pa* 6, 113, endure(d), go through *Pe* 554, C 1256, 1701, *Pa* 44, 242, 276; experienced C 892
suffraunce *n* patience, acceptance *Pa* 3, 417, 529

suffyse *v* ~ **to** suffice to, have sufficient capacity to take in or retain *Pe* 136

sulpen *pres pl* morally soil or pollute *C* 15, *imp* **sulp** *C* 1135; *pres ppl* **sulpande** polluting *Pe* 726; *pa ppl* **sulped** *C* 550, 1130; cf. **bysulpes**

sum *adj* some, one (undefined) *Pe* 428 +, *pl* **summe** *G* 28, 891, 892, **sum** 1527; *adv* partly, somewhat *G* 247; *pron* **of all and sum** in all and part, completely *Pe* 584, *pl* **summe** some (animates or things) *Pe* 508, *C* 388, 389, 1094, 1497, *Pa* 165, 166, 507, *G* 1328, 1699

sumned *pa ppl* summoned, called upon *G* 1052

sumoun *n* a call to appear or assemble *Pe* 539, 1098

sumtyme *adv* at one time *Pe* 760, *C* 1152, 1157, 1257, 1260, *Pa* 61, *G* 2449; at some time or another *Pe* 620, *C* 582

sumwhat *n* something *C* 627, *G* 1799; *adv* somewhat, to some degree *G* 86

sumwhyle *adv* at one time *Pa* 57, *G* 625, formerly *C* 1496; ~ ... ~ at one time ... at another *G* 721–2

sunder *adv in* ~ asunder *G* 1563

sunder *pres pl* separate *G* 1354; *pa* **sundrede** came apart *G* 659

sunderlepes *adv* separately, individually *Pa* 12

sunes *n pl* sons *C* 112, 258, 298, 331, 350, 1221, *Pa* 26

sunkken see **synk**

sunne *n* sun *Pe* 28 +

sunnebemes *n pl* sunbeams *Pe* 83

suppe *v* drink, quaff *Pa* 151, swallow *C* 108

sure *adj* sure *Pa* 117, confident *Pe* 1089; trusty *G* 588; *adv* firmly *Pe* 222; **surely** confidently *Pa* 315; indubitably *C* 1643, securely *G* 1883

sustnaunce *n* nourishment, food *C* 340, *G* 1095

sute *n* suite, correspondence; **of self** ~ matching, of the same colour *Pe* 203; **in** ~, **of (a)** ~, **of folwande** ~ matching *Pe* 1108, *C* 1457, *G* 180, 859, 2518, to match *G* 191

swalt see **swelt(e)**

swanes *n pl* swans *C* 58

swange (1) *n* waist *G* 138, 2034

swange (2) *pa pl* (of ‘*swinke*’) toiled, laboured *Pe* 586; cf. **sweng**

swange (3) see **swynges**

swangeande *pres ppl* swirling *Pe* 111

swap *n* blow, stroke *C* 222

swap *imp* exchange *G* 1108*

sware (1) *n* measurable side or dimension of a geometrical figure *Pe* 1029*

sware (2) *adj* square *Pe* 837, 1023, *C* 319, 1386; squarely built, thick-set *G* 138

sware (3) *v* answer, reply to *Pe* 240, *pres pl* *C* 1415, *imp* *G* 1108; *pres*

swares *G* 1756; *pa* and *pa ppl* **swared** *G* 1793, 2011
swarmes *pres* swarms *C* 223
swart *adj* black *Pa* 363
swat *pa* sweated, perspired *Pe* 586
swayf *n* impetus, sweeping blow *C* 1268*
swaynes *n pl* attendants, serving boys *C* 1509
swayves *pres* whirls, sweeps *Pa* 253; *pa* **sweved** swept *C* 222
sweande see **swey** (1)
swelme *n* heat, fire *Pa* 3*
swelt(e) *v* perish *C* 108, *Pa* 427; kill *C* 332; *pa* **swalt** perished *Pe* 816, 1160, *subj* **swalte** should die *Pe* 1160
sweng *n* toil, labour *Pe* 574; cf. **swange** (2)
swenges *pres* swings *Pa* 108; comes or goes fast *Pa* 253, *G* 1756, *pl* **swengen** *C* 109, *G* 1615, *pa* **swenged** *Pa* 250, *G* 1439, **swenged forth** came out promptly *C* 667; cf. **swynges**
swepe *v* sweep along *Pe* 111; sweep up, seize *Pa* 250*; *pres pl* **swepen** rush, speed, ~ **theretille** run to the spot *C* 1509; *pa* **swepe** swept *Pa* 341*
swere *v* swear *G* 403, 2122; *pres* **sweres** *G* 2051; *pa* **swer** swore *C* 667, *G* 1825
swete (1) *adj* sweet, pleasing, lovely *Pe* 19+, dear *Pe* 763, 829, *C* 816, *Pa* 156, *G* 2237; goodly *C* 788; good-humoured, complaisant *C* 640; as *n* **that** ~ that lovely one *Pe* 241, *G* 1222, (*in address*) ~ dear man *G* 1108*, **my** ~ my dear one *Pe* 325; *comp* **swetter** more welcome *Pa* 427, as *n* one more welcome *Pa* 236; *super* **swettest** most lovely *C* 1006, 1247
swete (2) *adv* pleasingly, beautifully *Pe* 111, 1057, *G* 1757; **swetely** gently, graciously *Pe* 717; neatly, nicely *G* 2034
swetnesse *n* pleasingness *C* 525
swetter, **swettest** see **swete** (1)
sweved see **swayves**
sweven *n* dream; **in** ~ in sleep *Pe* 62; *pl* **swevenes** *G* 1756
swey (1) *v* proceed *C* 788; *imp* **sweye** hasten *Pa* 72; *pres ppl* **sweande** sweeping (something) on *C* 420; *pa* **sweye(d)** hastened, swept *Pa* 151, *G* 1429; *transitive* swept *Pa* 236; fell *C* 956, sank *Pa* 151; **sweye doun** bent down *G* 1796
swey (2) see **soughed**
swoghe *adj* aswoon, trancelike *G* 243*; cf. **swowed**
swolgh *n* maw, jaws *Pa* 250
swolwed *pa* swallowed, destroyed *C* 1268, *Pa* 363
swone *n* swoon *Pe* 1180
sworde *n* sword *C* 1253, 1268, *G* 2319
swowed *pa* swooned; *poeticism* for slept *Pa* 442*; cf. **swoghe**
swyeres *n pl* squires *C* 87, *G* 824

swyft(e) *adj* swift, fast *Pe* 572; alert, prompt *C* 1509
swyft(ly) *adv* swiftly *Pe* 354, *C* 87, *Pa* 72, 108, 250, 363, *G* 1354
swymme *v* swim *Pe* 1160; *pa* **swymmed** swam *C* 388
swyn *n* swine, boar *C* 58, *G* 1439&
swynges *pres* dashes *G* 1562; *pa* **swange** dashed, swung *Pe* 1059; cf. **swenges**
swypped *pa* slipped away, shot away *C* 1253
swyre *n* neck, throat *C* 1744, *G* 138, 186, 957
swythe *adv* very, very much *C* 816, 1176, 1283, 1299, *G* 1281, 2259; fast *Pe* 1059, *C* 1211, 1509, *Pa* 236, *G* 815, 1424, 1615*; earnestly *Pe* 354, *C* 987, *G* 1860, 1866; powerfully, forcefully, keenly *C* 354, *G* 1897; firmly *G* 8, 2034; **as ~** as quickly as possible, at once *C* 1619, *Pa* 427, *G* 1400; **swythely** not tentatively *G* 1478
swythes *pres* scorches, parches *Pa* 478*
syde *adj* extensive *Pa* 353, long *G* 2431
sy see **see** (2)
syence *n* skill, art, knowledge *C* 1454, 1599; *pl* **syences** skills, body of knowledge *C* 1289
syfles *pres* (of wind) blows with a sibilant sound *G* 517, *subj* **syfle** should puff *Pa* 470
sykande *pres ppl* sighing *C* 715, *G* 1796; *pa* **syked** sighed *Pa* 382, *G* 672
sykyng *adv* sighing, with a sigh *Pe* 1175, *G* 753
sykynges *vn pl* sighings *G* 1982
syience *n* silence *G* 243
syilkyn *adj* silken, made of silk *G* 610
sylver *n* silver *Pe* 77, *C* 1277, 1344
sylveren *adj* silver *G* 886, **were of ~ sight** shone silver *C* 1406; *as n* silver vessels *G* 124
symbales *n pl* cymbals *C* 1415
sympelnesse *n* guilelessness, honesty *Pe* 909
symple *adj* humble *G* 503, not grand, not proud *Pe* 1134, *G* 1847; modest, mild *C* 746; *super* **symplest** humblest in status *C* 120
syn *conj and prep* since *Pe* 13+, **~ that** since the time that *G* 2320; *adv* then, afterwards *Pe* 1207, **synne** since then *G* 19; cf. **sithen**
synful(le) *adj* sinful *C* 15, 716, 1111, *Pa* 197
syng *v* sing *Pe* 891, *G* 472, 923; *pres pl* **syngen** sing *G* 509, chant *C* 7; *pa pl* **songe(n)** *Pe* 94, 882, 888, 1124, *C* 1516, 1763
synglere *adj* singular; **in ~** as unique *Pe* 8
synglerty *n* uniqueness *Pe* 429
syngne *n* figure, symbol *G* 625; sign, indication *C* 489, *G* 2164, 2433; *pl* **syngnes** events assumed to be divine signs *C* 1710
syngnettes *n pl* seals *Pe* 838
synk *v* sink *C* 910, *pres* **synkes** *C* 1026, *Pa* 172; drown *C* 398; **synkes**

in my eres assaults my ears C 689, **synk to my herte** deeply distress me Pa 507; *pres ppl* **synkande** sinking C 445; *pa pl and pa ppl* **sunkken** had sunk C 968, sunk C 1014

synne (1) see **syn**

synne (2) *n* sin Pe 610 +; *pl* **synnes** Pe 823, C 514, Pa 401, 405

synne (3) *v* commit sin Pa 517; *pres* **synnes** Pe 662; *pa ppl* **synned** C 679

syre *n* master (= God) C 661, 1112, Pa 93, 261, 413 (*in address*), G 751; master of a household G 1083, 1372*; great man G 685; *gen* of a lord C 1299; *pl* **syres** lords C 1260, (*in address*) sirs, my lords C 799; cf. **sir**

syt *n* misery C 1257; remorse Pe 663*; distress Pa 5; occasion of distress, provocation C 566, Pa 517

sythe *n* time, period of time C 1169, 1188, 1453; *pl* **sythes**, **sythe** times Pe 1079, C 1686, G 632, 656, 1868; **by sythes** at various times G 17; **fele sythe** (C 1417), **upon mony sythes** (G 982) frequently, **in sythes sere** several times G 761

ta *v* (*contracted form of take*) *pres* **tas** takes G 2305, **tos** goes Pe 513; *pres pl* **ta(n)** (they) take Pa 78, G 977, 1920; *imp* **ta** G 413, *refl* G 2357, *pl* **tas** C 735, G 1390, 1811; *pa ppl* **tan** taken Pe 614, G 1396, 1978, circumstanced G 1811, captured G 1210, detected G 2488, 2509, got, found C 763, **~ on honde** G 490, **~ up** begun C 735*, **tone** betaken G 2159*

tabarde *n* sleeveless overgarment C 41*

tabelment *n* horizontal section of a structure: step, tier Pe 994

table *n* board (forming table-top) C 832, 1419, G 884*, *pl* **tables** 1648; dining table C 39, 132, G 112, 345, **the highe ~** the dais at feasts G 108; horizontal slab of masonry Pe 1004, *pl* **tables** top parts of a wall, cornice G 789; **the (Rounde) Table** see **rounde**

tabornes *n pl* drums C 1414

taches *pres* attaches G 2176; *pa ppl* **tached** Pe 464, G 219, 579, 2512

taghte see **teche**

take *v* (*pres pl* **take(s)**; *imp* **take** (**thou take** C 330), *pl* **takes** C 154; *pa* **toke**, *pl* **toke(n)**; *pa ppl* **taken**) take(s), took Pe 387 +; *refl* C 1201; acquired G 2448*; take up Pe 944; give Pe 1158*, consign G 1966; apprehended G 2488, seize C 836, captured C 1192, 1297; received C 1130; seen, understood Pe 830, C 935; **~ to ... self/selven** take up, take on G 350, 1540; cf. **ta**

takel *n* nautical tackle Pa 233; *pl* **takles** gear G 1129

tale *n* words C 48* Pe 257, G 2133, remark G 1301, utterance, report Pe 865, 998, G 1056, 2124, statement Pe 311, 897, C 587, 662, 1557; speech G 638, conversation C 676, G 1236; story, account G 93, 1626, 2483; *pl* **tales** tales, stories G 1541

talent *n* will, desire *Pa* 416

talenttyf *adj* eager *G* 350

talk *n* talk, dialogue *C* 735

talk *v* speak *G* 2133; *pres* **talkes** *C* 154; *pres ppl* **talkande** talking *G* 108; *pa* **talked** said *G* 2372, uttered *C* 132

talkyng(e) *vn* speech, conversation *G* 917, 977

tame *adj* **make ... ~** subdue *G* 2455; *as n* tame animals *C* 311, 362

tan see **ta**

tapit *n* cloth *G* 568*; *pl* **tapites** hangings *G* 77, 858*

tappe *n* tap, blow *G* 406*, 2357

tars(e) *n* costly fabric associated with Tharsia *G* 77, 571, 858

tary *v* detain, cause to pause *G* 624; *tarry Pa* 59, pause *G* 1726, stay *Pa* 87

tas see **ta**

tasseles *n pl* tassels *G* 219

tayl *n* tail *G* 191, 1726; *pl* **tayles** *G* 1377*

tayt (1) *n* pleasure, fun, sport *C* 889, 935

tayt (2) *adj* trim, pleasing; bodily well grown *C* 871*, *G* 1377; **makes hit ~** is jolly *G* 988*

tech(e) (1) *n* blemish, vice *Pe* 845, *C* 943, 1230, *G* 2488; *pl* **teches** blemishes, stains *G* 2436; traits, marks *C* 1049

teche (2) *v* teach *C* 160, *Pa* 10, *G* 1527; show *C* 676, *G* 2075; **~ thee of** inform you about *C* 1733, *G* 407; **tech(e) me/yow (the gate) to** show me/you the way towards *Pe* 936, *G* 1069, *imp G* 401, 1966; *pres teches him to* shows him, points out to him *G* 1377; *imp pl teches G* 1533; *pa taghte* taught *G* 1485, 2379

techeles *adj* without blemish, faultless *G* 917

tee *v* go, make (my) way *Pa* 78*, 87, 416; *pres pl teen* go *C* 9; *subj tee C* 1262, 1573*; *pa ppl towen* journeyed *G* 1093

telde (1) *n* (place constructed for) shelter, residence *C* 866, *G* 1775; *pl teldes* houses *G* 11

telde (2) *v* **~ up** raise, erect *C* 211; *pres teldes up* raises, arouses *C* 1808; *pa and pa ppl telled* raised, erected *G* 795, **~ on loft(e)/ alofte**, **~ up** set up *C* 1342, *G* 884, 1648

telle *v* (*pres 2&3s telles*, *pl tellen*; *subj telle C* 1634, *G* 380, 1057, 1785; *imp telle*; *pa and pa ppl tolde*) tell(s), told *Pe* 134 +; relate(s), related *C* 1153, *G* 31, 480, 1951, 2501, 2494; say *G* 272, 291; speak of *G* 2130; uttered *Pe* 815; recite *G* 2188; **of ~, ~ (there-)of** give an account of (it) *G* 165, 719, 1008, 1514, 1656

teme (1) *n* theme, subject *Pa* 358, *pl temas G* 1541, homiletic theme or text *Pa* 358*; discourse *Pe* 944

teme (2) *v* produce offspring *C* 655*; be united as a follower with *Pa* 358*, *pres pl temen* attach themselves as followers to *Pe* 460*, *C* 9*

tempre *imp* temper, moderate *C* 775

tempte *v* put to the test, require proof from *Pe* 903*; *pres ppl* **temptande** distressing, perturbing *C* 283

tender *adj* tender *C* 630; susceptible, morally weak *G* 2436; ~ **of age** young *Pe* 412

tene (1) *n* anger *C* 283, 1137, *Pa* 90, soreness *C* 1137; pain *C* 687; distress *G* 22; trouble *C* 1232, *G* 22, 1008; *pl* **tenes** ills, troubles *G* 547, **with** ~ painfully *Pe* 332

tene (2) *adj* angry, upset *C* 1808; difficult to traverse *G* 1707*, terrible *G* 2075

tene (3) *v* afflict *C* 759, *G* 2002; *pa* and *pa ppl* **tened** tormented, harassed *G* 1169; felt pain *G* 2501

tenfully *adv* painfully *C* 160

tenor *n* purport, main point *Pa* 358

tenoun *n* tenon; **of rich** ~ splendidly joined *Pe* 993

tent *v* give attention to *Pa* 69; tend, look after *Pa* 498; ~ **Him with tale** pay Him the courtesy of conversation *C* 676; *pa* **tented** attended to *G* 1018, 1019, heeded *C* 935

tente *n* purpose, intention *G* 624; attention: **ye take thereon ful little** ~ you care little about that *Pe* 387

teres *n pl* tears *Pa* 383

terme *n* (a) (appointed) time *Pe* 503, span of time *C* 568; ~ **of the tyde ... of** date appointed for the time of *C* 1393; **of termes so longe** of such long duration *Pa* 505; **the lenthe of a terme** for an appointed length of time *C* 239; (b) limit, boundary: goal of a journey *G* 1069*, 1671; *pl* **termes** borders *Pa* 61; (c) term, word *C* 1733; *pl* **termes** words *Pe* 1053, phraseology *G* 917*

tethe *n pl* teeth *C* 160

teveled *pa* opposed, did battle *C* 1189

tevelyng *vn* struggle, combat *G* 1514

thagh *conj* though, although *Pe* 52 +

thar *pres* need *G* 2354

thare see **there**

that *dem adj and pron* that *Pe* 12 +, the *C* 594 +; *conj* that *Pe* 185 +; so that *Pe* 119 +, in order that *C* 553; in that *C* 694, 1090, *G* 559; when *C* 1169; where *C* 1532; *rel pron* that, which, who *Pe* 15 + (including ~ ... **hit** etc); that which, what (*Pe* 269 +), whoever *C* 580, *G* 926, 985, the one who *G* 2529, those who *C* 376, 719; introducing parallel clause *G* 346; **where** ~ where, **when** ~ when *C* 961, **how** ~ how *G* 1752; **if** ~ if *C* 759; **that that** that which *Pe* 536, the one who *Pe* 570, the thing which *C* 1144

thay *pron* they *Pe* 80 +

thayr *poss adj* (Norse-derived equivalent of **her**) **their** *G* 1359, 1362; *pron* **thayres** theirs, their own *C* 1527, *G* 1019

thede *n* nation, country *Pe* 483, *G* 1499; people: **in** ~ in public *C*

1717*; cf. **arethede**
thef *n* thief *Pe* 273, *G* 1725*; *pl* **thewes** thieves *C* 1142
theft *n* theft *C* 183
then(ne) (1) *conj* than *Pe* 134 +
then(ne) (2) *adv* then *Pe* 155 +; also *Pe* 213, *C* 1054, *G* 169; thus *C* 179
think(e) *v* think *G* 2397; resolve *Pe* 1151, intend (to) *C* 304, 711, 1729; **to** ~ when thinking, in thinking *Pe* 22; *pres* **thenkes** *C* 749, *G* 534, **on ...** ~ is attentive to *G* 2052; *imp* **think** *G* 487, 1680; *imp pl* **thenkes on** take care that *C* 819; *pres ppl* **thenkande** thinking *Pe* 370, *Pa* 294; *pa and pa ppl*: see **thoght(e)** (3)
there *conj* where *Pe* 26 +; *adv* there *Pe* 28 +; (*variants for rhyme*) **thore** *Pe* 562, *G* 667, 2356, **thare** *Pe* 830, 1021, *G* 463, 1889, (*non-rhyme*) 2508; (*as indefinite before a verb preceding its subject*) *Pe* 21&; (*introducing a wish*) *Pa* 188, *G* 839, 1893, 2120*
thereabout *adv* in the area *C* 1796, *G* 705; about it, engaged in that affair *G* 613; around it *G* 2485
thereabove *adv* over it *Pa* 382; above it, above them *C* 1481
thereafter *adv* after (that) *C* 93 +; then, as a consequence *G* 671
there-alofte *adv* thereabove, thereon *G* 569
thereamonges *adv* included therein *G* 1361
there-anunder *adv* underneath *C* 1012
thereas *conj* where *Pe* 129 +; **along** ~ along the route where *C* 769
thereat *adv* at it *G* 1634; in response to that, thereupon *C* 1509, *G* 909, 1463, 1514; at that place *Pe* 514
thereby *adv* from them *C* 1404, *G* 117; beside it *C* 1034
therebyside *adv* nearby *C* 673; beside it *G* 1925
therefore *adv* for that reason, therefore *Pa* 424 +; for that *G* 1392, at that *G* 1142; in exchange for that *G* 1107
therein(ne) *adv* therein, in that place *Pe* 447 +; in it *C* 311&, *Pa* 458, *G* 846, 1849, 2174, in that *Pe* 1168, in them *C* 1715, *G* 1767; amid it all *C* 527
thereof(fe) *adv* of it, of that *Pe* 99 +; out of them *C* 1499, 1507
thereon *adv* upon it/them *Pe* 1042 +, (up)on that place or thing *Pe* 387, *C* 507, *G* 570, over them *C* 1719; for that *Pe* 645
thereoute *adv* out (of there/here) *C* 44 +, out of them *G* 518; on the outside *C* 1184, 1196; outside, outdoors *Pe* 930, *C* 807*, *G* 2000, 2481
thereover *adv* over them *C* 1407
therethurgh *adv* through it *Pa* 354
theretille *adv* thereto, to that *G* 1110; to that spot *C* 1509, *G* 1369
thereto *adv* to/upon it/them *Pe* 664, *G* 219, 576, 650; to that *Pe* 833, 1140, *G* 1040, 2325, to that place *C* 1394, *G* 401, 933, 1325; for that *C* 701, to that end *G* 757

thereunder *adv* underneath (it) *Pa* 459, *G* 185, 2079

thereupon *adv* upon it *C* 1665

therewith *adv* at that, thereupon *Pa* 232, *C* 528, *G* 121; by that, with that *C* 138, 1501, *Pa* 60, *G* 1509, 1610; with them *C* 1406, *G* 980

these see **this**

thester *n* darkness *C* 1775

thewed *part adj* possessed of good qualities *C* 733

thewes (1) see **thef**

thewes (2) *n pl* characteristic behaviour or virtues *C* 203, 544*, 755, 1436, *Pa* 30; (good) qualities, moral or social graces of behaviour *G* 912, 916

thider *adv* thither, to that place *Pe* 723 +

thik(ke) *adj* thick *C* 1687, *G* 1356; dense *G* 1466, teeming *C* 220, heavy *C* 952, heavy-framed, not lean *G* 138, 175, 966; *adv* thickly, in large numbers *Pe* 78, *C* 504, *G* 612, 795, 801; densely *C* 222, *G* 769, forcefully, hard *C* 953, *G* 1702, 1770; rapidly *C* 1416*; *comp* **thikker** at more frequent intervals *C* 1384, more intensely *Pa* 6

thik-thrownen *adj* densely coiled, muscular *G* 579*

thing *n* creature, being *Pe* 771, *G* 1526; thing *Pe* 308, *C* 1359, *Pa* 332, *G* 93; **of ... no ~**, **no ~ of** no part of *Pe* 587, *Pa* 91; *pl* **things** things *C* 5 +

thinke *impers v* seem, *subj* **thinke** *C* 744, *Pa* 43; **(hit) me/us/him/thee think(es)** it seems to me/us/him/you *Pe* 267 +; **yow thinkes** it seems good to you *G* 1502; *pa*: see **thought(e)** (2)

thirled *pa* pierced *C* 952, *G* 1356, 1536

this (*pl* **these**) *dem pron* (*C* 42 +) and *adj* (*Pe* 250 +) this, these; *exophoric* (referring to a category familiar from outside the text) *Pe* 42, 505*, 1119, *C* 1771, *G* 473, 1112¹, 1139, 1514 × 2

tho (1) *pl dem adj* those *Pe* 73 +; *exophoric* (see **this**) *C* 1547; *pl pron* those (persons, things) *Pe* 557, *C* 173, 939; **~ fyve** five of those, five times as much *Pe* 451

tho (2) *adv* then *Pe* 873

thogh *conj* though, although *Pe* 345 +; even if *G* 1799*

thought (1) *n* thought *C* 516, *G* 645, 1993, intention *Pe* 524; mind *G* 1867; *pl* **thoghtes** thoughts *G* 1751

thought(e) (2) *pa* (of **thinke**) seemed; **me/him/hem/yow thoghte** (it) seemed to me/him/them/you *Pe* 153 +

thought(e) (3) *pa* and *pa ppl* (of 'thenke') thought *Pe* 137 +, *pa pl* **thoghten** *G* 1023; meant, intended *C* 138, *G* 331

thole *v* (a) suffer, undergo, be the passive recipient or object of an action or eventuality *Pe* 344, *C* 190, *Pa* 55, 91; (b) (as a virtue) endure patiently, be long-suffering *Pa* 6, 521; *pa* **tholed** suffered, allowed *G* 1859; endured *G* 2419

thonk(e) (1) *n* thanks *Pe* 901, *G* 1380, *pl* **thonkkes** 1980; **made ... a**

thonk expressed thanks to G 1984
thonk (2) *v* thank G 1080, 1949, 1975, 2020; *pres* **thonkes** C 745, G 773, 1031, 1961, 2046, 2408; *pa* **thonkked** G 939, 1866
thore see **there**
thorne, **thornes** *n pl* thorns G 2529; thorny bushes G 1419
thorpes *n pl* hamlets, settlements C 1178
thouself *pron* you yourself Pa 413
thrad *pa ppl* (of 'thraie') struck down C 751
thral *n* one of low degree, wretch C 134
thrange *adv* tightly Pe 17
thrust *n* thrust, jab G 1443
thrat(ten) see **threte**
thre *num* three Pe 291 +
threng *v* (Norse-derived variant of 'thrynge': see **thrynges**) press (one's way), go Pa 354; *pres pl* **threng** **thee after** follow you C 930
threpe *n* battle, contest G 2397; contention, insistence G 1859;
withoute ~ without ado C 350
threpes *pres* battles, contends for the upper hand G 504*
threpyng *vn* quarrelling, contentiousness C 183
thret *n* compulsion, force Pa 55, 267, G 1499
threte *v* quarrel, be belligerent Pe 561; 2&3s *pres* **thretes** deliver(s) threats (against) C 680, G 2300, ~ ... **of** denounces for C 1728; *pa* **thrat** forced, compelled G 1980, *pl* **thrat** gave dire warnings C 937, **thrat** attacked G 1713; *pa ppl* **threted** abused, reviled G 1725
thretty *num* thirty C 317, 751, 754
threwe, **threwen** see **throw**
thrid(de) *adj and n* third Pe 299 +
thro (1) *n* passion, rage C 754, Pa 6, 8
thro (2) *adj* impassioned, 'worked up' Pe 344; bold, energetic G 2300; intense G 1751; fine Pe 868*; firm, constant, earnest G 645; as *n* vigorous dogs G 1713
thro(ly) *adv* earnestly G 1867, eagerly C 504, heartily G 939, 1946, with energy G 1022, violently C 220, hard, fast C 180, at once C 590; ~ **schewed** shown thoroughly, fully shown C 1805
throng (1) *n in (the)* ~ in the company, among the others C 134, 754, in a crowd C 504
throng(en) (2) see **thrynges**
throte *n* throat C 180, 1569, Pa 252, 267, G 955, 1740
throw *v* ~ **forth** hurl out Pa 8; *subj* **throwe** turn out, happen G 1680; *pres* **throws** moves agitatedly, hurls about Pe 875; leaps up C 590; *pa* **threwe** (*pl* **threwen**) cast C 635, fell, plunged C 220, Pa 267, moved agitatedly C 879; *pa ppl* **throwen(e)** (a) thrown, cast C 1384, laid, set G 1740; morally propelled C 516; (b) packed tight C 504, 1775; (c) coiled, curved G 579*; wound, intertwined G 194*

throwe *n* short space of time *G* 2219

thrublande *pres ppl* jostling *C* 504; *pa* **thrubled** jostled *C* 879

thrych *n* thrust: **at a ~** in one swoop *G* 1713

thrych *v* squeeze, wring *Pe* 17; *pa* and *pa ppl* **thryght** pushed, thrust *G* 1443; packed, crowded together *Pe* 926, ?clustered *C* 1687; pierced, impaled *Pe* 706; set *C* 134; conveyed *Pe* 670; **thryght me** conveyed to me *G* 1946; cf. **thrych** *n*

thrye, **thryes** *adv* three times *C* 429, *G* 763, 1412, 1936

thryf see **thryve**

thryftyly *adv* properly, suitably *C* 635

thryght see **thrych**

thrynges 2&3s *pres* speeds, hurtles *C* 180; proceed(s) *G* 2397; **~ me after** follows in attendance upon me *C* 1639; *pa* **throng in** came in *G* 1022*, *pa pl* **throng(en)** pressed in in a crowd *C* 879, 1775; cf. **threng**

thrynne *n* threesome, a tripartite unity *C* 1727*; *adj* three, considered as a unity *C* 606, 645; **on ~ sythe** on a trio of occasions *G* 1868, **upon ~ wyses** in a triple way *C* 1805

thryvande see **thryve**

thryvandely *adv* plentifully, profusely *G* 1080*, 1380

thryve, **thryf** *v* thrive, prosper *G* 387; flourish, grow *Pe* 851; carry on life, have functioning vital processes *C* 249; *pres ppl* **thryvande** profuse *G* 1979, 1980, morally sound, unflawed *C* 751; *pa subj* **thryved** thrived, survived *Pa* 521

thryven *adj* flourishing; fine, excellent *Pe* 868*, 1192, *C* 298, *G* 1740; *super* **thryvenest** grandest, highest ranking *C* 1571*, 1639

thulged *pa* (of 'thilgen' and related to **thole**) **~ with** tolerated *G* 1859

thurgh *prep* through *Pe* 10+; by means of *C* 1324; **~ all other thinges** above all things *G* 645, 1080*

thurghoute *prep* throughout *C* 1559

thurghoutly *adv* completely, in all things *Pe* 859

thwong *n* thong, cord *G* 194; *pl* **thwonges** thongs, straps *G* 579

thyes *n pl* thighs *G* 579, 1349

thyn *poss adj* (used before words beginning with 'h' or a vowel) thy *Pe* 559+

thysel, **thyselven** *adj and pron* yourself *Pe* 341, 473, 779, *C* 581, *G* 395, 2141; *non-refl pron in oblique case* you *Pa* 316

til(le) (Norse-derived equivalent of **to** (2)) (a) *prep* to *C* 1064, 1174, *G* 673, until *G* 734; **her/him/yow/hem til(le)** to her/him/you/them *Pe* 676, *C* 882, 1752, *G* 1221, 1979; (b) *conj* until *Pe* 548+, **til that** until *Pe* 979, *C* 498 *G* 697, 991

tite *adv* quickly *Pe* 728, *C* 901, *Pa* 100, 127, 229, 251, *G* 299, 1596; **as/also** ~ right away, promptly *Pe* 645, *C* 64, 1099, 1213, *G* 31, 1210; *comp* **tytter** sooner *Pa* 231

tithyng *n* message C 498; *pl* **tithynges** tidings, announcements *Pa* 78; news, information C 458

to (1) *n* toe *Pa* 229; *pl* **tos** C 1691

to (2) *prep* to *Pe* 107 +; until C 1032; as *Pa* 55; *adv* too *Pe* 481 +; thereto C 1551, G 579; forward *Pe* 347; *forming inf with passive sense after 'to be' (is) to be sued for* *Pe* 563, *similarly* *Pe* 914, 951*, 955&, C 76&, *Pa* 223&, G 356, 1399

to-cleves *pres* cuts forcibly C 1806

to-drawes *2s pres* draw forcefully away, dispel *Pe* 280

togeder *adv* together *Pe* 1121 +

togh *adj* tough C 630

toght (1) *adj* 'taut', firm; **made hit** ~ made a firm bargain *Pe* 522

toght (2) *adj* tough, stout G 1869

to-hewe *v* cut to pieces, cut down G 1853

toke(n) see **take**

token *n* indication, representation G 1486, 1515; sign *Pe* 742, G 2398, 2509; *pl* **tokenes** signs C 1049; instances, examples G 1527

tokened *pa* represented C 1557

tokenyng *vn* betokening, token G 2488

to-kerve *v* cut; split up, split apart C 1700; *pa* **to-korven** cut through, slashed C 1250

tolde see **telle**

tole *n* cutting implement C 1342; weapon G 413*, 2260; *pl* **toles** cutting implements C 1108

Tolouse Toulouse C 1108*; **tolouse** a fabric from Toulouse G 77*

tom *n* space of (otherwise unoccupied) time C 1153, leisure *Pe* 134; delay *Pa* 135; **toke more** ~ spent a longer while *Pe* 585

to-marred *pa ppl* disfigured C 1114

tomorne *adv* tomorrow morning G 548, 756, 1097, 1965

to-murte *pa* broke *Pa* 150

tone see **ta**

tong(e) *n* tongue *Pe* 100, 225, 898, C 1524; **with** ~ spoken G 32

top *n* head *Pa* 229

topace *n* topaz *Pe* 1012, C 1469

toppyng *n* crest, forelock G 191

to-preve *pres pl* prove clearly *Pa* 530

tor *adj* ~ (**for**) **to telle** difficult to tell *Pe* 1109*, G 165, 719

to-raced *pa ppl* ripped apart G 1168

to-rent *pa and pa ppl* burst open C 368; gashed *Pe* 1136; torn to pieces *Pa* 96, G 1168*

to-riven see **to-rof**

tormenttours *n pl* officers charged with punishing miscreants C 154

torne *pa ppl* torn *Pa* 233; torn down C 1234; gashed G 1579

to-rof *pa* (of 'to-rive') split apart C 964; ~ **of** tore from *Pa* 379; *pa ppl*

to-riven torn away *Pe* 1197

torres *n pl* towering clouds, cloud-masses *Pe* 875*, *C* 951

tos see **to** (1)

toter *pa* tossed *Pa* 233

totes *pres* looks (with some restriction to vision), peeps *G* 1476

to-torne *pa ppl* torn *C* 33, 41

touch *n* touch, contact *Pa* 252; the verbal bringing up of something, mention *G* 1301; ?deed *C* 48*; *pl touches* sounds (of an instrument) *G* 120; ?terms of an agreement *G* 1677*

touch(e) *v* touch *Pe* 714, *C* 1091; discuss *G* 1541; *pa and pa ppl*

touched touched *C* 245, 1099, came into contact with *Pe* 898;

entered *C* 283, 1657; arrived at, reached *C* 1393; **touched to** told to *C* 1437

toun(e) *n* town, city *Pe* 995, *C* 721&, *Pa* 361&; villa, estate *C* 64; *with reduced sense* homes *G* 1049*, **in** ~ in the place *C* 763, among men *G* 31*, there *G* 614; *pl townes* cities *C* 751

tour *n* tower, stronghold (of heaven) *Pe* 966, *C* 216*; *pl towres* towers *C* 1189, 1383, *G* 795

ournayes *pres* wheels around *G* 1707*; *pa tournayed* tourneyed, took part in a tournament *G* 41

ournes *n pl* deeds, tricks *C* 192

to-walten *pa pl* (cf. **waltes**) surged forth, erupted *C* 428

towe *v* draw, convey *Pa* 100; *pa ppl towen* drawn, parted *Pe* 251

towen see **tee** and **towe**

towres see **tour**

to-yere *adv* this year; ~ **more** for a year or so to come *Pe* 588

tramme *n* (nautical) tackle *Pa* 101; *pl trammes* contrivances, schemes *G* 3

trantes *pres* uses tricks and stratagems *G* 1707; cf. **traunt**

tras *n* path, course *Pe* 1113

traunt *n* trick, device *G* 1700; cf. **trantes**

trauthe *n* justice, rightfulness, rectitude *Pe* 495, *C* 723; loyalty *C* 236; truth, good faith *G* 626, 1057, 2470; troth, pledged word *C* 667, *Pa* 336, *G* 394*, 403, 1108, 2287, 2348; truth, fact *C* 1604, 1736, *G* 1050; **temple of the** ~ temple of the true faith *C* 1490; **in** ~ in truth, as the truth *C* 1703; **by my** ~ by my faith *G* 1545, 1638, **by his** ~ on his faith *C* 63

travayl(e) *n* exertion, labour *Pe* 1087, *Pa* 505; journey *G* 2241

travayledes *2s pa* laboured *Pa* 498; *pa ppl travayled* *Pe* 550, *G* 1093*

trayste *adj* assured, certain *G* 1211; cf. **tryst(e)**

traythly *adv* grievously *C* 907*, 1137

traytor *n* traitor *G* 1775; *pl traytours* evil-doers *Pa* 77, *C* 1041

tre *n* wood *C* 1342; tree *C* 622, *G* 770; *pl tres* trees *Pe* 1077, *C* 1041; boards *C* 310, *Pa* 101

trecherye *n* treachery, treason, bad faith C 187, G 4, 2383
trede *v* tread; ~ **on** set foot in *Pa* 316
tres see **tre**
tesor(e) *n* valuable possession C 866; wealth in the form of precious metals or gems *Pe* 237, 331
tesorye *n* storehouse for valuables C 1317
tresoun *n* treachery, deceit, subterfuge C 187, G 3
tresour *n* custodian of the treasury C 1437
trespasse *subj* trespass C 48; *pa* **trespast to** trespassed against C 1230
trestes *n pl* supports for a table-board, trestles C 832, G 884, 1648
tried, **triet** see **trye**
trifle *n* a matter of small importance G 547, 1301; *pl* **trifles** (a) small matters G 108; (b) decorative or ornamental designs G 165; bands of material G 960*
trifled *pa ppl* decorated with fancy work C 1473*
troched *pa ppl* ?pinnacled C 1383, G 795*
tron see **trynande**
trone *n* throne C 211
trot *n* trotting pace C 976
trow(e) *v* believe *Pe* 487 + , trust G 2238; *2s pres* **trowes** *Pe* 295; *imp* **trowe ye** believe that G 1396, 2112, ~ **thou never** do not at all believe C 587; *pres ppl* **trowande** believing C 662; *pa* **trowed** believed *Pe* 282, C 1335, hoped C 388; *parenthetical (as)* **I trow(e)** as I understand, I should think C 1686, 1803, *Pa* 299, G 1347, 2205
trueluf *n* true love G 1527, 1540; *pl* **trulofes** quadrifoliate flowers G 612*
truly *adv* indeed *Pa* 361, G 2112, truly, truthfully G 401, 406, 1785, 2444, faithfully G 380*, 2348; in proper place C 1490*
trumpes *n pl* 'trumpets' (trumpet-like horns) C 1402, G 116, 1016
trussen *v* pack G 1129; *pa* **trussed** stored away C 1317
trye *v* try, test; **be true to** ~ can be certainly true *Pe* 311; *pa ppl* **triet** (legally) tried *Pe* 702, brought to trial *Pe* 707, **tried** ascertained, exposed G 4*; *part adj* specially selected C 1317, select, choice, fine G 77, 219
trynande *pres ppl* ~ **a high trot** going at a fast pace C 976*; *pa* **tron** proceeded, went C 132, *Pa* 101, *pl* **trone a tras** directed (their) course *Pe* 1113
tryst(e) *v* trust, rely, have confidence *Pa* 324, G 380; *imp pl* **tryste** G 2325; cf. **trayste**
tryste(ly) *adv* trustily G 2348; **ful true and tryste** most truly and trustily *Pe* 460*
tryster *n* hunting station G 1712; *pl* **trysteres** G 1146*, 1170
trysty *adj* faithful, steadfast C 763
tulk *n* man C 687, G 3&; (*used of God*) C 498; *pl* **tulkes** men C 1189,

1262, 1623, G 41

tult see **tylte**

tuly *n and adj* (made of) red silk G 568*, 858

turne *v* turn, return G 1099; turn round C 976; go C 64, G 2075; undergo moral-religious reform, convert *Pa* 518; *pres* **turnes** turns G 457; *pa* **turned** G 1200, ~ **To wrast** went awry G 1662–3, ~ **to hele** became healthy C 1099; *pa ppl* **turned** reformed and/or converted *Pa* 506; revolving G 22

tusches *n pl* tusks G 1573, 1579

twayne *adj and n* two C 674, 782*, 788, 1749, G 962, 1864

twayned *pa ppl* 'twained', parted *Pe* 251

twelmonyth *n* period of twelve months, year G 298; **at this tyme** ~ a year from today G 383, a year ago today G 2243

twyes see **twys**

twyges *n pl* sprigs, small branches G 746

twynande *pres ppl* twining, twisting C 1691

twynne (1) *adj* two: **in** ~ asunder *Pe* 251, C 966, 1047, G 425, 1339

twynne (2) *v* part C 402; separate itself, go away G 2512

twynne-hue *adj* bicoloured *Pe* 1012

twynnen *pres pl* form a pair G 191*

twys, twyes *adv* twice *Pe* 830, G 1522, 1679

tyde *n* time C 1393, G 585, 2168; time of year G 2086, (liturgical) season, festival G 736, 932, 1033

tydes *pres* betides; **yow** ~ is your due G 1396

tyed *pa ppl* fastened, fixed *Pe* 464; ~ **hemselven** bound themselves to each other C 702; **tyt** joined *Pe* 1013*

tyght (1) *v* draw, come *Pe* 718; ?manage C 1108; *pa* **tyght him** betook himself C 889; *pa ppl* **tyght** come *Pe* 503

tyght (2) intend G 2483; appoint, assign C 1153; *pa* **in termes** ~ set forth in words *Pe* 1053; *pa ppl* **tyght** set, put G 568, 858

tylte *v* fall, topple *Pa* 361; *pa* **tult** toppled, pulled down C 1213; tumbled, fell *Pa* 252; *pa ppl* **tylt** pulled, drawn C 832, **out** ~ thrown out, shoved out *Pa* 231

tymbres *n pl* timbrels, small drums C 1414

tyme *n* time *Pe* 503+; **on a** ~ on a certain occasion C 1657; *gen* **tymes** G 1069; *pl* **by tymes** on occasions G 41

tymed *pa ppl* timed, arranged so as to be complete at a certain time G 2241

tyme (1) *n* bit; **a little** ~ a little while *Pa* 59

tyme (2) *v* lose *Pe* 332, *Pa* 500, 505; destroy C 907; *2s pres* **tynes** destroy C 775; *pa* **tynt** destroyed C 216

tyned *pa* shut, enclosed C 498

type *v* make topple; ~ **doun** knock down *Pa* 506

tyrauntes *n pl* ruffians C 943

tyrauntrye *n* abuse of power in order to harass and oppress C 187
tyrve *v* ~ **of** (C 630), *pres pl* **tyrven of** (G 1921) strip off
tyrved *pa ppl* (of 'terve') overturned C 1234*
tyt see **tyed**
tytelet *pa ppl* acting as a summarizing heading G 1515; cf. **tytle**
tythyng *n* tidings, announcement, message C 1557
tytle *n* valid or authentic claim or right G 626; authentication G 480;
 cf. **tytelet**
tytter see **tite**
tyxt *n* text *Pa* 37, G 1515, (written) words C 1634, authoritative
 writing G 1541

uch(e) *adj* each *Pe* 5 +; ~ **a** every *Pe* 117 +
uchone *pron* each one *Pe* 450 +; **uchones** each one's *Pe* 863, 1103
ughten *n* dawn, morning C 893
ugly *adj* gruesome G 441, ghoulis G 441, lowering G 2079, grim G
 2190; *super* **uglokest** most horrific C 892
umbe *prep and adv* around, about C 879*, 1474, 1569, 1687, 1744, G
 1830, 2034; **all** ~ all over, everywhere *Pe* 204; **me/him** ~ around
 me/him C 1689, *Pa* 309, 381
umbe-brayde *pa* accosted, came out with (speech) C 1622*
umbe-clypped *pa* enclosed, enfolded G 612
umbe-foldes *pres* enfolds, encircles G 181
umbe-gon *pa ppl* surrounded, encircled *Pe* 210*
umbe-growen *pa ppl* begrown, encircled with growth C 488
umbe-kestes *pres* circles in order to search out C 478; *pa ppl*
umbekesten (as *hunting term*) explored in order to find the prey
 pursued G 1434
umbe-lappes *pres* laps around, overlaps G 628
umbe-lye *v* surround C 836
umbe-pyght *pa ppl* bestudded *Pe* 204, surrounded *Pe* 1052
umbe-schon *pa* beshone, shone around *Pa* 455
umbe-stounde(s) *adv* sometimes *Pa* 7, 122
umbe-sweyed *pa ppl* bewashed C 1380*
umbe-teye *pa* surrounded, encompassed G 770
umbe-thour *adv* round about, all around C 1384
umbe-torne *adv* all around G 184
umbe-walt *pa* cast around, surrounded C 1181
umbe-weved *pa* enwrapped G 581*
umbre *n* shade C 524
unavysed *pa ppl* unadvised, ill-considered *Pe* 292
unbene *adj* arduous, difficult G 710*
unblemyst *pa ppl* unblemished, unstained *Pe* 783
unblythe *adj* unhappy G 746; unpleasant C 1017

unbrosten *pa ppl* unburst C 365

uncely *adj* dangerous, vicious G 1562*

uncheryst *pa ppl* neglected, not taken care of C 1125

unclannes *n* moral or literal dirt or impurity C 30, 1800, 1806

uncleue *adj* defiled, polluted C 1144; indecent, unfitting C 1713*,
unsanctioned C 710; *adv* uncleanly C 550

uncler *adj* unclear, indistinct *Pa* 307

uncloses *pres* unlocks C 1438; discloses, reveals C 26; *pa pl* **unclosed**
opened G 1140

uncortayse *adj* discourteous, ungracious *Pe* 303

uncoupled *pa* released from the leash, on which hunting-dogs were
held in pairs G 1419

uncouth *adj* unknown C 414, 1600, G 1808; weird, prodigious C
1722; new, novel G 93

under *prep and adv* below, underneath C 409 +, beneath G 202; ~
God (C 1077, G 2470), ~ **Crystes selven** (G 51), ~ **heven** (G 56,
352, 1853) in the world, ~ **hevenryche** G 2423; cf. **anunder**

undernomen *pa* (of 'undernime') understood, comprehended *Pa* 213

understonde *v to* ~ to wit, that is to say *Pe* 941; *imp pl* **understondes**
understand *Pa* 122

undertake *v* take up, perform *G* 1483
underyede *pa* understood, realized *C* 796
undo *v* break up (a carcass) *G* 1327; *pa* **undid** destroyed *C* 562
unethe *adv* hardly, scarcely *G* 134
unfayre *adj and adv* ugly, not goodly, offensive *C* 1801; in an ugly manner *G* 1572
unfolde *imp* disclose, reveal *C* 1563; *pa* **unfolded** opened up *C* 962
unfre *adj* ignoble; **by ~ chaunce** by some distasteful chance *C* 1129
ungarnyst *pa ppl* unfurnished, unprovided with the necessary accessories *C* 137
unglad *adj* unhappy, discontent *Pa* 63
ungoderly *adj* squalid *C* 1092; vile *C* 145*
unhap (1) *n* misfortune, mischief *C* 143, *G* 438, catastrophe *C* 892
unhap (2) *v* unbind *G* 2511*
unhappen *adj* ill-omened, unblessed *C* 573
unhaspe *v* unlock, reveal *C* 688
unhole *adj* not healthy, unsound *C* 1681
unhonest *adj* indecent, lewd *C* 579
unhuled see **unhyles**
unhyde *v* disclose, reveal *Pe* 973*
unhyles *2s pres* uncover, reveal *C* 1628; *pa ppl* **unhuled** uncovered *C* 451
unknawen *part adj (of terrain)* unfrequented *C* 1679
unkyndely *adv* disloyally *C* 208*
unlace *v* cut up the carcass of a game animal *G* 1606
unlapped *pa ppl* not tied up *Pe* 214
unleaute *n* breach of truth, bad faith *G* 2499
unlyke *adj* dissimilar *G* 950
unmanerly *adv* without propriety, improperly *G* 2339
unmard *pa ppl* with intact virginity *C* 867*
unmete *adj* unsuitable, unfitting *Pe* 759; out of the ordinary (in size), massive *G* 208
unnevened *pa ppl* unspoken *C* 727
unpynne *v* unbar, unbolt *Pe* 728*
unryght *n* wrongfulness, illegality; **with ~** wrongfully, unlawfully *C* 1142
unslayn *pa ppl* unslain, not killed *G* 1858
unsmysten *pa ppl* unsmitten *C* 732
unsounde (1) *n* distress, trouble *Pa* 58, 527
unsounde (2) *adj* diseased *C* 575
unsoundely *adv* violently, dangerously *C* 201, *G* 1438*
unsparely *adv* unsparingly, plentifully *G* 978
unspurd *pa ppl* unasked, without asking *G* 918

unstered *pa ppl* untroubled C 706
unstrayned *pa ppl* free from stress *Pe* 248
unswolwed *pa ppl* undevoured, undestroyed C 1253
unthewes *n pl* bad traits, vices C 190
unthonk *n* disfavour, ill-will C 183, *Pa* 55
unthryfte *n* vice, dissoluteness C 516, 1728
unthryftyly *adv* in a wretched *and/or* immoral way C 267
unthryvande *part adj* graceless, base G 1499
unthryvandely *adv* ignobly, unworthily C 134
untrauthe *n* faithlessness, bad faith G 2383, 2509
untrue *adj* false *Pe* 897, C 184, 587; disloyal to one's master C 456,
 1161
unwar *adj* unthinking, imperceptive *Pa* 115
unwaschen *part adj* unwashed C 34
unwelcum *adj* unwelcome as a guest C 49
unworthelyche *adj* ignoble, base C 305
unwyse *adj* unwise *Pa* 330
unwytte *adj* unsound of wits, foolish *Pa* 511
upbraides *pres pl* cast up C 848
upbraydes *pres* rebukes *Pa* 430
upholdes *pres* holds up, sustains G 2442
uplyfte *pa ppl* uplifted C 987
upon *prep* upon C 1387&; in G 1272*; *adv* thereupon, on it *Pe* 208, C
 1276, G 1649; **has/had** ~ wear C 141, wore G 2021
uppe *adv* (*emphatic variant of 'up'; used at line ending*) risen G 928; *astir*
 C 834
uprerde *pa* raised into life C 561
upryse *v* rise up G 1437; get out of bed C 896, *pa ppl* **uprysen** G 1126
up-so-doun *adv* upside down *Pa* 362
upwafte *pa* rose up C 949
upynyoun *n* opinion *Pa* 40
urthely *adj* earthly, mortal *Pe* 135, C 35
usage *n* practice C 710
use *v* (*pres* **uses**, *pl* **usen**; *pa and pa ppl* **used**) practise(s), practised C
 202, 251, 267, 1173, 1359, G 651, 1491, 2106; partake of
 (Eucharist) C 11*; had relations with G 2426*; **his dayes he uses**
 he spends his days C 295
usles *n pl* ashes C 747*, 1010
utter *adv* out; out into the open G 1565; **put/holden** ~ turned out,
 put out of doors C 42, *Pa* 41
valay(e) *n* valley G 2145, 2246
vale *n* low-lying ground between hills C 673, G 2271, 2482; *pl* **vales**
Pe 127

vaniſt *pa* vanished C 1548
vanyte *n* vainglory, empty ſhow C 1713, *Pa* 331
vaunt *n* claim C 664*
vayle *v* be ſucceſſful *Pe* 912; *pa* **vayled** was of value C 1311; were of uſe C 1151; cf. **awayled**
vayles *n pl* veiling; ſtrips of cloth wound round the head G 958
vayn(e) *adj* vain, uſeleſs *Pa* 331; **takes ... in** ~ uſe up in vanity and ephemera *Pe* 687*; **ſet Himſelf in** ~ ſet nought by Himſelf *Pe* 811; ~ **glory** vaingloriousneſs C 1358
vayres ſee **veray** (2)
vengeaunce *n* vengeance, retribution C 247, 1013, *Pa* 284, 370, 408, 419, vengeful anger C 744
venge *v* exact vengeance or puniſhment C 201, *Pa* 71; *pa* **venge**d inflicted puniſhment C 199, 559, avenged themſelves G 1518
venquyſt, **venquiſhed** *pa* and *pa ppl* vanquiſhed, overcome C 544, 1071; ſucceſſfully prevailed in (an adventure) G 2482
venym *n* poiſon; corruption C 574, *Pa* 71
venysoun *n* (carcaſes of) game animals G 1375
veray (1) *adj* true, veritable *Pe* 1184, *Pa* 370, veracious *Pe* 1185
veray (2) *adv* cloſely, faithfully *Pa* 333; **verayly** (in **vayres** G 1015) in truth C 1548, G 161, 866, literally, as the truth C 664, in the true way, correctly G 1342, well and truly G 1375, 2245
verce *n* paſſage from the Pſalter *Pe* 593*
veres *pres* lifts, raises *Pe* 177; **vered** *pa* raised *Pe* 254
vergynes *n pl* virgins, maidens *Pe* 1099
vergyn(y)te *n* virginity *Pe* 767, C 1071; cf. **vyrgyn**
vertue *n* virtue *Pa* 284, G 2375; *pl* **vertues** virtues G 634; **Vertues** Virtues (one of the nine orders of angels) *Pe* 1126
vertuous *adj* poſſeſſed of (ſupernatural) powers, potent as charms C 1280, G 2027
vessel(le) *n* veſſels collectively, plate C 1311, 1429*, 1451, 1791; *pl* **vesselles** veſſels for table or altar C 1151, 1315, 1713
vesselment *n* veſſels collectively C 1280, 1288
vesture *n* apparel *Pe* 220, G 161; *pl* **vestures** (eccleſiaſtical) veſtments C 1288
vilany *n* conduct of a villein C 863; baſeneſs G 634, 2375, groſſneſs C 544, 574; indecorum, impropriety G 345; wickedneſs *Pa* 71
vilanous *adj* lacking courtlineſs, ill-mannered G 1497
vilte *n* vileness, lowneſs C 199; cf. **vylen** and **avyled**
violent *adj* dratically forceful C 1013
viſage *n* face, countenance *Pe* 178; appearance G 866*
vouche *v* publicly aſſert C 1358*; ~ **hit ſaf** grant, beſtow G 1391; *pa* **vouched** pledged *Pa* 165
vowes *n pl* vows, pledges *Pa* 239; cf. **avowes**

voyde *v* leave *G* 345; (*of cities*) demolish *Pa* 370*; ~ **away** banish *C* 744*; *pres* **voydes out** removes *G* 1342; *pa* **voyded** disappeared *C* 1548; rid themselves of *G* 1518; demolished, wiped out *C* 1013; *pa* **ppl voyded of** free from, purged of *G* 634*

vycios *adj* immoral, wicked *C* 574

vygour *n* power, strength *Pe* 971

vył *adj* highly distasteful, repugnant *C* 744

vylen *pres pl* debase *C* 863; cf. **vilany** etc and **avyled**

vyne *n* vineyard *Pe* 502&

vyolence *n* violence, harmful assault *C* 1071

vyoles see **fyoles**

vyrgyn *adj* of or relating to a virgin *Pe* 426; cf. **vergyn(y)te**

vys *n* visage, countenance *Pe* 254, 750

wache *n* staying awake, sleeplessness *C* 1003; soldiers on look-out duty *C* 1205; cf. **wakes**

wade *v* cross through water on foot *Pe* 143, 1151*, *G* 2231; *pa* **wod** went into (water) *G* 787

waft see **weve**

wage *v* ?continue *Pe* 416*

waged *pa ppl* waved, flapped *C* 1484

waken (*pa and pa ppl* **wakened**) woke up *Pe* 1171, *Pa* 446, 468, 473, *G* 1194, 1200; awakened, roused *C* 891, 933, (*of sound*) *G* 119; (*of weather and wind*) raise, roused, rise, arose *C* 323, 437, 948, *Pa* 132, 469, *G* 2000; raised *C* 1166, 1175, arose, was kindled *G* 2490; lit *G* 1650

wakes *pres* (*pa* **woke**, **waked**, *pa ppl* **waked**) is awake *Pa* 130; stayed up late (in revelry) *G* 1025, 1094; watched over, guarded *C* 85; cf. **wache**

wakker see **wayke**

wal(le) *n* perimeter wall of a castle or city *Pe* 917, 1017, 1026, *C* 1381, 1390, *G* 787, 809; *pl* **walles** *C* 1181, 1190, 1776, *G* 783

wale (1) *adj* choice, fine, goodly *C* 1716, 1734, *G* 1010, 1403, 1712, 1759

wale (2) *v* choose *Pa* 511, *G* 1238; pick out with the eye, discern *Pe* 1000, 1007, find *G* 398; *imp* **wale thee** choose for yourself *C* 921; *pa ppl* **waled** chosen *G* 1276

walk *v* (*pres* **walkes** walks, *pl* **walkes**; *pa* **welke**, *refl* **Him welke** *Pe* 711) walk(s), walked *Pe* 101, 399, *C* 503, 1674, *G* 2178; **walkes** **aywhere** spreads everywhere *G* 1521*

wallande *pres ppl* surging, gushing, welling up *G* 1762

walles see **wal(le)**

walt (1) see **waltes**

walt (2) see **welde** (2)

walter *v* roll, extend C 1027; *pres walteres* rolls, rolls around Pa 263, 297; *pres ppl walterande* rolling (in the waves), wallowing Pa 247; *pa waltered* rolled, rolled around C 415, Pa 142, rolled down G 684

waltes *pres* (cf. **to-walten**) bursts C 364, ~ **of** wells up from C 1037; *pa and pa ppl walt* cast C 1734, removed, conveyed Pe 1156, ~ **out** removed G 1336, ~ **open** sprang open C 501

wamel *v* ~ **at his herte** feel sick inside Pa 300*

wan see **wynne** (3)

wande *n* smooth branch, switch G 1161, *gen wandes* of the rod or staff G 215

wane *adj* lacking, absent, wanting G 493

waned *pa ppl* waned, lessened C 496

waning *n* diminution, reduction Pe 558

wanles *adj* hopeless, despairing Pa 262

wap *n* stroke, blow; **at a ~ (one)** at a (single) stroke Pa 499, G 2249

wapped *pa* whapped, whipped G 1161*, 2004; ~ **open** threw open C 882

war thee *imp* beware C 545; take care, be careful C 165, 1133; ~ **for** beware of, guard yourself against C 1143

warded *pa ppl* guarded, kept safe Pa 258

ware (1) *adj* aware C 970; wary, cautious C 589, wary not to do something C 712, G 2388; vigilant C 292; **was/were** ~ became aware, noticed Pe 1096, C 606, 970, Pa 249, G 764*, 1586*, 1900; (*as hunting cry*) G 1158; *comp adv warloker* more prudently G 677

ware (2) *v* spend, use G 402, 1235*; *pa ppl waret* delivered G 2344

ware (3) *pa pl* (*variant of 'were'; used for rhyme*) Pe 151, 1027

warisch *v* protect, shelter C 921; *pa ppl warist* cured, recuperated G 1094

warlok *n* foot-shackle Pa 80

warloker see **ware** (1)

warlowes *n pl* warlocks, practisers of occult arts C 1560; *gen warlowes* of a monster Pa 258

warly *adv* cautiously, furtively G 1186; watchfully G 1900

warm(e) *adj* warm Pa 478, G 506, 684; *adv* warmly Pa 470; *v pa warmed* C 1420*, G 1762

warnes *pres* warns, urges (by reason of impending danger) G 522; admonishes Pa 469

warnyng *vn* pre-announcement C 1504*

warp(en) *v* cast C 444; deliver G 2253; utter Pe 879, C 152; *pa warp(ped)* cast G 2025, uttered Pa 356, C 213, 284, G 224, 1423

warthe *n* shore, bank Pa 339, G 715

wary *v* curse C 513; *pa ppl waryed* accursed C 1716

wasch(e) *v* wash C 323, 355, 548, 802; *pres wasches* Pe 655; *imp wasch* C 1127; *pa wesch* Pe 766, G 887; *pa ppl waschen* washed C

618, 831, 1133, 1138, *G* 72

wasse *pa* (variant of 'was'; used for rhyme) *Pe* 1108, 1112

wast *n* waist *G* 144

waste (1) *n* uncultivated land *G* 2098

waste (2) *v* spend or use up unprofitably or superfluously *C* 1489; annihilate *C* 326; *pa* and *pa ppl* **wasted** laid waste *C* 1178; done away with, destroyed *C* 431; *part adj* **wasted** withered, burnt up *Pa* 475

wasturne *n* wasteland, uncultivated land *C* 1674

water *n* water *Pe* 111 +, stretch or body of water *Pe* 107, *C* 323, *G* 715, 2203, 2231; *pl* **wateres** waters *C* 437, 496, *Pa* 134, 138, *G* 1169; water-courses, rivers *C* 1380, 1776

wathe see **wothe**

wawes *n pl* waves *Pe* 287, *C* 382, 404, *Pa* 142

wax(e) *v* (*pres* **waxes**; *pa* **wax(ed)**, **wex**) grow, become *Pa* 491, *G* 522, *subj* *C* 1123, became *Pe* 538, *Pa* 410, grows *G* 518, grew *C* 204, 375, 1198, *Pa* 499, *G* 319; comes into being *G* 997, arose *C* 235; *pl imp* **waxes** increase, reproduce *C* 521; increasingly flowed *Pe* 648, 649, *C* 397; *pa ppl* **art waxen** have grown *Pa* 497

waxene *adj* made of wax *G* 1650*

wax-lokes *n pl* wax-like lumps *C* 1037*

way(e) *n* way, path *Pe* 350 +; means *Pe* 580; *pl* **wayes** paths *Pe* 691, *C* 282, 767, *G* 2479; **by no (kynnes) wayes** (**by no way** *G* 1045) by no means *Pa* 346, *G* 2471; **went (on) his/her way** went on his/her way *G* 688, 1557, 2074; **go forth thy wayes** go about your business *Pa* 524

wayferande *pres ppl* wayfaring, travelling *C* 79

wayke *adj* weak *G* 282; *comp as n* **the wakker** the weaker *C* 835, *super as n* **wakkest** weakest *G* 354

waykned *pa* lost strength *C* 1422

waymot *adj* stormy, furious: **so** ~ in such a rage *Pa* 492

wayne *v* bring, send, convey *C* 1616; *pr* **waynes** sends *Pe* 131; *pa* **wayned** sent *C* 1504, 1701, *Pa* 467, *G* 2456*; directed *G* 984; *pa ppl* **wayned** conveyed, carried *Pe* 249; brought *G* 264

wayte *v* see, observe *Pa* 436, *G* 306, examine *C* 1552; watch out, take care *C* 292; *pres* **waytes** looks *C* 1423, *Pa* 130, *G* 1186; glares *G* 2289; *subj* **wayte after** look in the direction of *Pa* 86; *imp pl* **waytes** search *C* 99; *pa ppl* **wayted** looked (around) *G* 2163, searched *Pe* 14

wayves *pres* ~ **up** opens *G* 1743*; *pa* **wayved** moved to and fro *Pa* 454, *G* 306; told, admonished *G* 984; gave *G* 1032, furnished with *G* 1032, 2459*

we, we lo *inter* oh! ah! *G* 2185, 2208

webbes *n pl* cloths *Pe* 71

wedde *v* wed, marry *Pe* 772, *C* 934, *pa* **wedded** *C* 69; *pa ppl* **weddede**

wyf wedded wife C 330

weddyng *n* marriage, wedding *Pe* 792

wede (1) *n* raiment, apparel *Pe* 748, 766, C 793, G 1310; item of clothing G 987, 2358; armour G 831, 2025; *pl* **wedes** robes, clothes *Pe* 1102+; armour C 1208, G 861, 2013

wede (2) *pa* went raving **wod** [mad] C 1585

weder *n* fair weather, spring G 504*; storm C 444*; breeze, wind C 475; atmosphere, air C 847, 1760; *pl* **wederes** storms C 948, G 2000

wel (1) *n* well-being, prosperity, good fortune C 1647; what is good G 1267*

wel (2) *adv* well *Pe* 164+, indeed G 1874; much *Pe* 148, C 1132, 1138, *Pa* 114, 132, G 736, 1276; very *Pe* 528, 537, 581, *Pa* 169; readily *Pe* 302; easily G 2405; *predicative* fortunate, happy *Pe* 239, 1187, G 2127

welawylle *adj* very wild G 2084*

welawynne *adj* very joyful G 518*

welawynnelly *adv* joyously, beautifully C 831

welcom (1) *adj and inter* welcome *Pe* 399, G 252, 814, 835, 1237*, 2240*; hospitably received C 813; *super* **welcomest** most welcome G 938

welcom (2) *v* welcome G 819*; *pres* **welcomes** greets G 1759, *pa* **welcomed** G 1477

welde (1) *n* control, use, disposal G 837*

welde (2) *v* (2&3s *and pl pres* **weldes**; *subj* **welde** C 1646) wield, use C 835, G 270, have at one's command or disposal, have, possess(es) *Pa* 464, G 835, 1064, 1528, 1542, 1790, 1791, 1802, 2430, 2454; enjoy C 705; govern(s), has/have control or dominion over C 17, 195, 644, 1664, *Pa* 16, 322, G 837; **for to** ~ (C 1351), **to wolde** (*Pe* 812) at his disposal, in his possession; *pa* **walt** possessed, enjoyed G 231; passed, spent (a period of time) G 485

Welder *n* Master, Ruler *Pa* 129

wele *n* (that which brings) prosperity, well-being *Pe* 14, 133, 394, C 651, *Pa* 262, G 50, 485, joy G 997, 1371, 1767, 2490; wealth G 7, 1270, 1820, valuable thing G 1394, material value G 2037, 2432; ~ **and/other wo** good fortune and/or in bad *Pe* 342, G 2134; *pl* **weles** joys, fine things *Pe* 154

weliest see **wely**

welke see **walk**

welkyn *n* welkin, sky *Pe* 116, C 371, *Pa* 207, G 525, 1696

welle *n* spring, fount *Pe* 365, 649; *pl* **welles** C 439

welle-hed *n* water source C 364; *pl* **welle-hedes** C 428

welt *pa* (of 'welte' [fall, topple]) ~ **in** tumbled into *Pa* 115

welwed *part adj* withered, shrivelled *Pa* 475

wely *adj* possessed of well-being, blessed, happy *Pe* 101; *comp* **wylger**

mightier C 375; *super weliest* healthiest, in best condition C 1244
wemles *adj* spotless, immaculate *Pe* 737
wemme *n* stain, blemish, defect *Pe* 221, 1003
wench *n* (*pl wenches*) unmarried girl(s) C 974, 1250; floozies C 1423*, 1716
wende (1) *n* turning G 1161
wende (2) *v* go *Pe* 643, G 559, 1053, 1065, 1098, 1102; ~ **of** turn from *Pa* 403; *pres wendes* goes *Pa* 339, C 675, **wende(s) (on) his way** goes his way C 777, G 1028; turns G 2152; *pres pl wendes* C 534; *imp wende* C 471, *pl wendes* C 521; *pa went* (**wende** G 900), *pl went, wenten* went *Pe* 525, 1130, C 501, G 72&; turned C 415, G 1718; parted *Pe* 631, 761; *pa ppl went* arrived G 1712
wene (1) *v* think, believe *Pe* 47, 201, C 821, *Pa* 304, G 270, 1226, 2405; **to wene** to be thought of *Pa* 244; *pa wende* supposed *Pe* 1148, *Pa* 111, G 669, 1711
wene (2) *v* (?variant of 'wane': cf. **waned**) lessen, diminish *Pe* 1141*
went, wenten see **wende**
wenyng *n* thought, assumption *Pa* 115
wepes *pres pl* weep *Pa* 17; *pres ppl wepande* weeping C 777; be-weeping, weeping over *Pa* 384; *pa weped* wept *Pa* 480
weppen *n* weapon C 835, G 292, 368, 384, 1586, 2222; *pl weppenes* weapons G 270
wer see **were** (1) and (2)
werbelande *pres ppl* trumpeting, sounding shrilly G 2004
werbles *n pl* musical phrases, sequences of notes G 119
were (1) *v* ward off G 2015; defend G 2041; *pa wered* defended, protected *Pa* 486; **wer him** defended himself C 69
were (2) *v* wear G 2510, 2518; *pres 2s weres* G 2358, 3s **flesch weres** is clothed in flesh C 287; *pa wer* (*Pe* 205, G 1928), **wered** (G 1928, 2037) wore
were(n) *subj* would/should/might be C 22 +; *pa pl* (they) were *Pe* 6 +; used for 'was' at line ending C 209*, 259, G 903
werk *n* work, deed *Pe* 599; doings, behaviour, action(s) C 305, 589, 658, 1050; workmanship C 1390, G 2367; handwork, creation C 198, *Pa* 501*; **withoute ~ more** without more ado C 1725; *pl werkes* menial labour C 136, 1258; deeds, actions, behaviour C 171, 266&, *Pa* 390, G 1515; functional parts of an artefact C 1480, pieces of decorative work G 216, workmanship, design G 164*, 1817, 2026, 2432; **thy werkes** behaviour prescribed by you C 763; cf. **work(e)**
werkmen *n pl* labourers *Pe* 507
wernes *pres* refuses G 1824; *pa ppl werned* refused G 1494, 1495
wernyng *vn* refusal, resistance G 2253
werre *n* combat, war C 1178, G 16, 271, 726; (animal's) aggressive

resistance *G* 1628*
werres *pres* wars, battles *G* 720
wery *adj* weary *Pa* 163
weryng *vn* process of being continually in use or wear *C* 1123
wesch see **wasche**
wete (1) *adj* wet, rainy *Pe* 761; (of a wound) bleeding *Pe* 1135
wete (2) *v* moisten *C* 1027
weterly *adv* plainly, clearly *G* 1706
weve *v* pass, go *Pe* 318; yield, give *G* 1976; *pa* **weved** gave *G* 2359;
 waft cast, tossed *C* 422, ~ **open** cast open *C* 453, ~ **hit him after**
 closed it behind him *C* 857; *pa* *ppl* **weved** arrived *Pe* 976
weven *pres pl* weave *Pe* 71; *pa* *ppl* **woven** *G* 2358
wex see **wax(e)**
weye *v* ~ **upon the wore half** put into the worse side of the balance
 C 719; *pres pl* **weyen** weigh (anchor) *Pa* 103; *imp* **weye** carry
 (round) *C* 1508; *pa pl* **weyed** brought *C* 1420, *G* 1403
whal *n* whale *Pa* 247, 297, 339; *gen* **whalles bon** whale's bone, ivory
 Pe 212
what *interrog adj and pron* what *Pe* 186 +, whatever *Pe* 523, *G* 1082;
 who *Pa* 397*; *conj* that *C* 152; *adv* (introducing a question that implies
 a negative assertion) why on earth? *Pe* 1072, *G* 563; *inter* indeed! lo!
 C 487, 845, 846, 855, 1241, 1583, *G* 1163, 2201, 2203, 2204,
 (expressing feigned surprise) *G* 309
whatso *pron* what *Pa* 243, *G* 255, whatever *Pe* 566, *C* 1099, *G* 382,
 1550; *adj* **what ... so** whatever *C* 100, 819, *G* 384, 1107, 1167,
 1406, 1407, 1851
wheder *adv* whither, to what place *C* 917
whederwarde *conj* in which direction *G* 1053
whederwardeso *adv* whithersoever *C* 422
whenso *conj* whenever *G* 1682
wherefore *interrog* why *G* 1294; *conj* for which reason *G* 2278
whereso(ever) *conj* wherever *Pe* 7, *C* 791, *Pa* 42, *G* 395, 644, 1227,
 1459, 1490; where *C* 675
whete *n* wheat *Pe* 32
whethen *adv* whence *G* 461, from wherever *G* 871
whether (a) *adj* whichever *G* 1109*; (b) *adv* however, nevertheless *Pe*
 826, *C* 570, *G* 203; *interrog adv* (introducing a question) *Pe* 565, *C*
 717, *G* 2186; (c) *conj* although *Pe* 581; whether *Pe* 130 +, ~ ... **or**
 Pe 604
whettes *pres* whets, rubs tusks to sharpen them *G* 1573; *pa* **whette**
 made a whetting sound *G* 2203
whetting *vn* whetting *G* 2220
whiderwarde-so-ever *adv* to whatsoever place *G* 2478
while (1) *n* period of time *C* 743, 1281, *G* 1195, 1235, 2370; **the ... ~**

- for the duration of ... *G* 940, 985; **a** ~ for a time *Pa* 59, 87, 234, *G* 134, 1996; **bot a** ~ (*C* 833), **bot on little** ~ (*G* 30) for only a short time; **any** ~ for any length of time *G* 257, 2058; **in a** ~ shortly *C* 1620, *G* 1646; **other** ~ at other times *G* 721; **the** ~ for the foreseeable future *G* 1791
- while** (2) *adv* at one time, in the past *Pe* 15; *conj and prep* until *Pe* 528, *C* 1686, *G* 536&; for as long as *C* 1114+; while *C* 206+ (**while that** *G* 1235); **the** ~ in which time *Pa* 443
- white** *adj and adv* white *Pe* 163+; bright, shining *Pe* 1011
- whoso** *pron* whatever person *C* 1647, 1649–50, *Pa* 174; *with conditional force* who, whoever *C* 1, *Pa* 5, *G* 209, 306, 1849, **who** 355, 1112; **whos ... so** whoever's *C* 1648
- why** *inter* what! *G* 1528; *interrog adv* why *C* 828+
- whyder** *interrog adv* whither, to what place *Pa* 202
- whyrlande** *pres ppl* whirling *G* 2222; *pa* **whirled** *C* 474
- wich** *interrog pron* what *C* 169; *rel pron* what *C* 1060; *adj* what (kind of) *C* 1060, 1074, *G* 918; ~ ... **soever** whichever *Pa* 280
- wight** *adj* doughty, valiant *Pe* 694; strong *G* 1762; *super* **wightest** boldest *G* 261, most vigorous 1591; *adv* **wight(ly)** energetically, quickly *C* 617, 908, *Pa* 103, *G* 688
- wil(le)** *v* (2*s pres* **wil**, **wylt**; **wilnes** *Pe* 318) *will* (*used as auxiliary to form volitional future tenses*) *Pe* 350+; want or wish to *Pe* 318, 794, *C* 165, 1065, *Pa* 202, *G* 1098, 1823; choose(s) to *C* 930, *G* 549, 2141; *as independent v* want(s) *G* 1822, 2215, wish *G* 2469, choose *G* 384; *pa*: see **wolde** (1)
- wille** *n* will, desire *C* 76+; wayward emotion, passion *Pe* 56, *C* 200; inner feelings *C* 302, 687; that which is willed *Pe* 131; spirit, heart, mettle *C* 232, *G* 57*, 352; good will *G* 2387; **at (your)** ~ at (His/your) will, whichever and whenever wanted *Pa* 130, *G* 836, 1371, 1952, at your disposal *G* 1039, at your pleasure *G* 1081; **at His/his/your** ~ in accordance with His/your will *Pa* 339, *G* 1214, when he wished *G* 887; **in his** ~ at his will *C* 1646; **by your** ~ with your permission *G* 1065; **with a good** ~ very readily *G* 1861, very willingly *G* 1969; **with good** ~ with good will *G* 1387, 1500, 2430; cf. **wylnesful** etc
- wit, wot** (**wate** *Pe* 502) *v* (*pres 2s* **wost**, *3s* **wot**) know(s) *Pe* 47+; perceive, see *C* 1052, 1319; **wit at yow** know from you *G* 1508; **ne wost/wot/wyst in world** know/knew not at all *Pe* 65, 293, *G* 1053; *subj* **wit** may be aware of *C* 1360; *imp pl* **wit ye wel** be sure *G* 1820; *pa* **wyst(e)** knew *Pe* 376+, *2s* **wystes** *Pe* 617, *pl* **wyste(n)** knew *G* 461, 1435, 2490; were aware of *C* 1204, were conscious of *G* 155; cf. **wyt**
- with** *prep* with *Pe* 201+; by *Pe* 806+, on the part of *G* 49; at the hands of *G* 384; in preparation for *C* 56; ~ **this** thereupon *G* 316

withalle *adv* besides, moreover, as well C 636, G 106, 1926

withholde *v* hold back C 740; *pres* **witholdes** holds back G 2268; *pa* **withhelde** withheld Pa 408, G 2291, held back G 2168

withinne *adv* inside Pe 1027, C 883, 1391, G 1192, on the inside C 20 +, within it C 1465, Pa 208; in (their, his) heart(s) Pa 215, G 2370, at heart C 305, Pa 523; *prep* in C 1779 +, inside C 1069 +, into C 1566, G 804; **him** ~ within him C 284, 1607; ~ **hem** within the ring formed by them G 1435

withnay *imp* refuse, deny Pe 916

withoute(n) *prep* without Pe 12 +; *adv* on the outside C 20, 313, 1205

wittnesse *n* evidence C 1050; testimony G 2523

wlates *pres* experiences turning of the stomach C 1501; *impers* **me** ~ my stomach turns C 305

wlatsume *adj* disgusting, nauseating C 541

wlonk(e) (1) *adj* splendid, magnificent Pe 122, 1171, C 831, Pa 486, G 581, 2432, beautiful C 899, 933, G 515; fine C 606; exalted Pe 903, lofty; great, noble G 1977; *super* **wlonkeste** G 2025; as *n* **the wlonk** what is fair C 1052, **that** ~ that great man G 1988

wlonk (2) *adv* splendidly C 793, G 2022

wo *n* woe, misery Pe 56, 342, C 284, 541, 1701, Pa 256, G 2154; difficulty, distress Pe 154, G 1717

wod (1) see **wade**

wod(e) (2) *adj* mad, demented, irrational C 1552, G 2289; morally reckless or unwise Pe 743, C 828; rabidly angry C 204; (of water) raging C 364, Pa 142, **wodder** more frenzied, wilder Pa 162

wodbynde *n* climbing plant, ivy Pa 446*, 459&

wodcraftes *n pl* arts and skills of hunting G 1605*

wode (1) *n* wood, woodland Pe 122, C 370, 387, G 515, 764, 2084, 2152, (= hunting ground) 1106, 1415, 1628; tree C 1028

wode (2), **wodder** see **wod(e)**

wodschawes *n pl* wood-shaws, woodland groves Pe 284

wodschip *n* rage Pa 403

woghe *n* evil, wrongfulness Pe 622, G 1550*

woke see **wakes**

wolde (1) (2*s* **woldes**) *pa* (of **will(e)**) used to form volitional future would Pe 304 +; would like to Pe 390 +; wanted to Pe 1155, Pa 496, G 307; willed C 1647, chose to C 444, Pa 30, G 1537, 1992; was willing to C 231, Pa 113; meant, intended (to) C 500, 1552, G 1127, 2262; would be willing to C 752, 1153, G 343, 811, 1063, 1218, 1393, 1835, would want to C 1140, G 1497, 1828; as independent *v* wanted G 271, 1199, 2478, willed C 360, would wish (that) Pe 451, 849, Pa 83, G 2127, **I** ~ I would that Pa 494, G 1801

wolde (2) see **welde** (2)

wolten *adj* woollen Pe 731

wolle *n* wool, fleece *Pe* 844

wombe *n* belly, stomach *C* 462, *Pa* 262, 306, *G* 144; *pl* **wombes** *C* 1250, 1255

wommon *gen* woman's *Pe* 236

won (1) *n* expedient: desired course of action *G* 1238; means, wealth *G* 1269

won (2) *n* custom *C* 720

won(e) (3) *n* dwelling (place), residence *C* 140 +, house, habitation *Pe* 1049, *G* 739; city *C* 891, 928, 1770, *Pa* 69, 436; *pl* **wones** dwelling places, habitations, quarters *Pe* 32 +; places to live in *C* 471; *used in singular sense metri causa* dwelling *C* 777, 779*, *G* 685, 1051*, 1386, 2198, 2400

wonde *v* draw back (from fear), flinch, be deterred, turn aside *Pe* 153, *G* 563, *subj* 488; *pa* **wonded** *C* 855*

wonder (1) *n* wonder *C* 584, *Pa* 244, 256, *G* 1322, 1481, *pl* **wonderes** *G* 29; wonderful event *G* 480, dramatic event(s), wondrousness *C* 1390, *G* 2459; fearful wonder, prodigy *C* 1504*, *G* 16; astonishment, marvelling *C* 1310, *Pa* 496, *G* 238, 467, 496

wonder (2) *adj* wondrous *Pe* 221, 1095

wonder (3), **wonderly** *adv* wondrously *C* 1381, very (much), extremely *C* 5, 153, 880, *Pa* 384, *G* 787, 1025; prodigiously *C* 570, *G* 2200

wondered *pa refl* **him** ~ he had wonder *G* 1201

wone (1), **wones** see **won(e)** (3)

wone (2) *v* (*pres* 2&3s **wones**, *pl* **wones**; *pa and pa ppl* **woned**) dwell(s), dwelled, reside(s) *Pe* 47 +; reside(d), remain(ed) *G* 813; were situated *C* 362; *pres ppl* **wonyande on lyve** living *C* 293; *pa ppl* **wont** accustomed (to) *Pe* 15, 172, *C* 1489, **has** ~ have taken place *G* 17

wonne *adj* dark *Pa* 141

wonne(n) see **wynne** (3)

wonnyng *n* dwelling place *C* 921

wont (1) *n* lack *G* 131

wont(e) (2) *pres pl* lack *C* 13, are lacking *C* 739, *subj* *G* 987; *pres wontes* *G* 1062; *pa* **wonted** lacked *Pe* 215, was wanting *G* 2366

wont (3) see **wone** (2)

wonyande see **wone** (2)

word(e) *n* word *C* 152, 1555, *Pa* 356, *G* 224, 314; command *C* 348; *Pa* 208; statement *Pa* 414, *C* 213, *G* 1792; speech *Pe* 294, *C* 1669, *Pa* 345; fame *G* 1521; *pl* **wordes** words *Pe* 307 +; statements *Pe* 291

worded *pa ppl* spoken *Pa* 421

wore *pa* (variant of 'was' and 'were'; *used for rhyme*) *Pe* 142, 154, 232, 574

woried *pa* bit to death *G* 1905

work(e) *v* work, do C 663, G 238; carry out (a command, etc) *Pa* 136, G 1039, 1546; act G 2096, 2208, 2253; fashion C 1287; *pres 2s workes* behave C 1063, *pl werken* toil, work *Pe* 511; *imp work* make, fashion C 311, *pl workes* labour *Pe* 536; *pa and pa ppl*: see **wroght(e)**; cf. **werk**

worker *n* maker, craftsman C 1501

world(e) *n* world *Pe* 537 +; *gen worldes* world's C 1048, 1802, G 261; **the world** the way of the world, rules of nature G 504, 530, 2000*; **her** ~ their heyday C 1298; ~ **withoute ende** for ever C 712; **ne wot/wost/wyst in (this)** ~ have/had no idea in the world *Pe* 65, 293, G 1053; **of the** ~ (G 50, 238, 938, 997), **in (the/this)** ~ (*Pe* 476 +) in the world, on earth C 252, on occasion C 1123

worme *n* worm *Pa* 467; *pl wormes* snakes C 533; dragons G 720

worre *adj and adv* (Norse-derived variant of **worse**) C 719; *as n* defeat G 1588, 1591

worschip (1) *n* honour, esteem, high standing *Pe* 394 +; marks of respect G 1976; **weve** ~ pay honour G 1032; **with** ~ in a way that shows honour to it/him/me C 1127, 1616, G 2441; **wordes of** ~ respectful words C 1592; **this worldes** ~ high standing in this world C 1802

worschip (2) *v* worship, acknowledge as God *Pa* 206; *pres worschipes* honours, reveres G 1227

worse *adj and adv* worse C 1320, G 726; of lower status 113; *as n the* ~ those of lower status C 80, defeat *Pa* 48 (cf. **worre**); *super worst(e)* worst G 1792, 2098, *as n* C 694

wort *n* plant G 518; *pl wortes* *Pe* 42, *Pa* 478

worthe *v* be (*indicating change of state*), become C 580, 686, 1066, *Pa* 22, 360, G 1202, happen, come about *Pa* 436; **me schal** ~ my fate will be G 1214; **when I schal saf** ~ once I am safe *Pa* 334; *pres 2s worthes* will be C 1738*, *Pa* 200, 3s **me worthes** it will be for me G 1035, **hit worthes to** it becomes, it shall be G 1106, 1387; *subj* become C 60, 901, 1116, should become C 1056, 1125, befall G 2127, (*in wishes and curses*) be *Pe* 362, C 727, 925, G 2127, 2374, let it be G 1302, **worth hit** whether it turn to G 2134; *pl imp worthes to mony* increase your numbers C 521; *pa* **worthed** came about G 485, **worthed of** happened to *Pa* 243; *subj ye worthed* you would be G 2096; *pa ppl* **worthed** been made into G 678, **worthen** come about *Pa* 414, **is worthen to** has risen to *Pe* 394

worth(e)ly (1), **worth(i)lych(e)** *adj* worthy *Pe* 846; excellent, noble *Pe* 1073, C 49*, 471, 651, 1298, 1351, *Pa* 475, G 343; *as n that* **worthly** that excellent one *Pe* 148; *comp* **worthloker** finer *Pa* 464

worthly (2), **worthily** *adv* worthily, nobly *Pe* 1133, G 1386, 1759; fittingly, properly G 71, 144; in a regular or honourable way G 1988

worthy (1) *adj* worthy *Pe* 616, C 84; excellent *Pe* 494, C 231, G 559,

1537, high-ranking C113; suitably dignified G 819; adequate *Pe* 100; as *n* excellent person G 1508, good people C 718; *super* **worthiest** most excellent G 261

worthy (2) *adv* in a worthy or fitting way G 1477

wost, **wot** see **wit**

wothe (**wathe** G 2355) *n* danger C 855, 988, G 222, 488, 1576, (source of) harm *Pe* 375; *pl* **wothes** *Pe* 151

wounden see **wyndes**

woven see **weven**

wowe *n* house wall (as opposed to city or castle perimeter wall) *Pe* 1049, C 832&, G 858; *pl* **wowes** C 839, G 1180, 1650

wow yng *vn* amorousness G 2361, 2367

wraght see **wrought(e)**

wrak *pa* avenged Himself C 198, 570

wrake *n* vengeance, retribution C 204&, punishment C 718; destruction C 386, 970; destruction caused by violent hostilities G 16; **set has His** ~ has delivered His retribution C 1225; **heven** ~ vengeance of the heavens *Pa* 185

wrakeful, **wrakfulle** *adj* vengeful C 302, punitive C 541

wrang see **wrong(e)** (1)

wrappes *2s pres* **thou** ~ **thee** you wrap yourself C 169; *pa ppl* **wrapped** immersed *Pa* 317*; enfolded *Pa* 494

wrast (1) *n* twist, unpleasant turn of events G 1663*

wrast (2) *pres pl* **wrast out** press out *Pa* 80; *pa* **wrast** wrested, turned, ~ **hit so high** made it mount so high C 1166; *pa pl* **wrasten out** forced or pressed out (sounds); *pa ppl* **wrast** formed by habit, disposed G 1482, ~ **out** thrust out, forced out C 1802

wrasteles *pres (of wind)* contends violently G 525, *pres pl* **wrastel** *Pa* 141, *pa* **wrestled** C 949

wrath(e) *n* anger, wrath *Pe* 362, C 204, 326, 746, 1143, 1166, *Pa* 403

wrath(e) *v* become angry, conceive wrath C 690, *Pa* 431; ~ **with** visit (my) wrath upon *Pa* 518; *pa and pa ppl* **wrathed** afflicted G 726; brought into distress G 2420; grew angry C 230, *Pa* 74; angered, offended C 719, 828; *subj* **yow wrathed** it angered you G 1509

wrech(e) (1) *n* wretch C 230, 828, *Pa* 113, 170, 196; *pl* **wrechtes** C 84, 851

wrech (2) *adj* wretched (by reason of hardship and/or baseness) *Pa* 258

wreched *adj* base, abject, unregenerate *Pe* 56

wrenches *n pl* tricks C 292

wreyande *pres ppl* exposing, announcing G 1706

writ *n* (piece of) writing C 1552, 1567, 1630; Scripture *Pe* 997, C 657; **Holy Writ** the Bible *Pe* 592, *Pa* 60, 244; cf. **wrytes**

wro *n* corner, nook G 2222; passage (of a text) *Pe* 866*

wrought(e) *pa* (of 'worche') (2s **wroghtes**, *pl* **wrought(en)**), *pa ppl* **wroght** created, made *Pe* 683 +; constructed, fashioned *C* 318, 1381, 1455; performed, done *C* 171, 348, did *C* 205; acted, proceeded *C* 1319, *G* 677; committed (sin) *Pe* 622, 631, 825, *C* 205, 725, *Pa* 510; laboured *Pe* 525, 555; caused, brought about *G* 2344, 2361; **wraht** throbbed painfully *Pe* 56; **how thay wroght** what they did *G* 1997; **wroght to** created for; **has wroght upon** has engaged in *Pe* 824

wroken *pa ppl* avenged; rid, delivered *Pe* 375

wrong(e) (1), **wrang** *n* trouble, harm *Pe* 15; wrongdoing *Pe* 631, *C* 76, *Pa* 376

wrong(e) (2) *adj* wrong, wrongful *C* 268, *Pa* 384, *G* 1494

wrong (3) *adv* (of direction) astray, amiss *Pe* 488*; wrongly, improperly *Pe* 614; **all** ~ all amiss *C* 891

wrot *pa* ~ **up** rootled up, ate away *Pa* 467

wroth see **wrythe**

wroth(e) *adj* angry *C* 5, *Pa* 48, 410, 491, 497, *G* 319; displeased *G* 70; aggressive *G* 1706, 1905; fierce, savage *C* 1676; (of wind) strong, turbulent *G* 525; at variance, at odds *Pe* 379; divided (within himself) *G* 1660*; *comp* **wrother** more raging *Pa* 162

wrothly *adv* angrily *C* 280, 949, *Pa* 132, with rage *G* 2289; *comp* **wrothloker** more angrily *Pa* 132, *G* 2344

wruxled *pa ppl* set up, set out *C* 1381*, *G* 2191

wrytes *pres* writes *C* 1534; *refl* **him** ~ writes *Pe* 1033; *pa ppl* **wryten** written *Pe* 834, 866, 871, *C* 1725; cf. **writ**

wrythe *v* turn, turn aside *Pe* 350, 488*; *pres pl* **wrythen** (they) bend their bodies *Pe* 511, **wrythes** twist their way *C* 533, **wrythe me in a warlok** twist my feet into shackles *Pa* 80; *pa* **wroth** turned round *G* 1200, ~ **to dispite** interpreted it as a slight *C* 821*

wy *inter* (expressing indignation) *G* 2300

wychecraft *n* magic arts *C* 1560

wyches *n pl* practitioners (of either gender) of magic arts *C* 1577*

wyddered *part adj* withered *Pa* 468

wyde *adj* wide *C* 370; (of a wound) gaping *Pe* 1135; *adv* wide(ly) *C* 318; **on** ~ all around *C* 1423; **up** ~ wide open *G* 820

wydoes *n pl* widows *C* 185

wye *n* man *Pe* 100 +; attendant *G* 2074; (used of God) *C* 5, 230, 280, 1807, *Pa* 111, 206, 397, *G* 2441; (in address) *C* 545, *G* 252, 1508, 2091, 2127, 2240, 2469; *gen* **wyes** man's *G* 314; *pl* **wyes** men *Pe* 71 +; servants *C* 899

wyf *n* woman *C* 1244, *G* 1001, 1495, *gen* **wyves** woman's *C* 112; wife *Pe* 772 +, *pl* **wyves** wives *Pe* 785, *C* 298, 350, 503, 1250

wyght *n* being, creature *Pe* 338, 494, *C* 471, *G* 1792

wykes *n pl* (of body parts) corners *G* 1572; cf. **schyre-wykes**

wyket *n* door set within main gateway C 857, 882; doorway C 501*

wykke *adj* wicked C 908, *Pa* 69; adverse, hostile C 1063

wykked(e) *adj* wicked, evil C 570, 855, 1050, 1360; *as n* C 718

wylde *adj* wild, not tame C 58, 533, 1676, *Pa* 247, *G* 1467, 1628; turbulent C 415, 948, *G* 2000; unrestrained, lawless C 1269; impassioned C 302; wayward, mercurial *G* 89*; (*of sound*) loud *G* 119, 1423; (*of terrain*) unconnected with civilization, rough, rugged *G* 741, 2163, 2479; *as n (the) ~* wild animal(s) C 311&; *G* 1150, 1167, 1586, 1900, 2003

wyl-dremes *n pl* pleasing dreams *Pa* 473*

wyldrene *adj* belonging to untamed nature, remote from civilization; ~ **depe** desolate deeps of the sea *Pa* 297

wyldreneſse *n* rough, uninhabited, uncultivated terrain *G* 701

wyles *n pl* wiles, artfulness *G* 1700, 1711, 2415, 2420

wylger see **wely**

wylneſful *adj as n* wilfulness, obstinacy C 231*

wylnyng *vn* will, desire *G* 1546

wylsfully *adj* deliberately C 268

wylsum *adj* wild, obscure, off the beaten track *G* 689*

wylt (1) see **wil(le)**

wylt (2) *pa ppl* (*of 'wille' [stray]*) gone *G* 1711

wyly *adj* cunning, artful *G* 1728; *as n* wily creature *G* 1905; *adv* cunningly, skilfully C 1452

wymmen *n pl* women C 268*, *Pa* 511, *G* 1269, 2415, 2426

wynd *n* wind *Pa* 207 +, breeze, air C 847; **upon** ~ in the air C 1484; *gen* **wyndes** wind's *G* 784; *pl* **wyndes** C 421, 457, 948*, *Pa* 141, 161, *G* 516

wyndes *pres s and pl* take(s) a course, turn(s) C 534, *G* 530*; *pa ppl* **wounden** wound about, bewound *G* 215

wyndow *n* window C 318, 453, *G* 1743

wynge *n* wing C 1484, *pl* **wynges** *Pe* 93

wynne (1) *n* joy, pleasure *G* 1765, 2420; **with** ~ beautifully *G* 15

wynne (2) *adj* desirable, delightful *Pe* 154, *G* 1032, 2430, 2456; lovely, welcome *Pe* 647

wynne (3) *v* gain *Pe* 579 +; fetch C 617; ~ betake yourself *G* 1537, ~ **me** get myself (to) *G* 402; *imp* **wynne him thee** fetch him to you C 1616; *pres s and pl* **wynnes** win(s), gain(s) C 1120, *Pa* 106; gets to *G* 1569, goes *G* 2044, 2050; *subj* **wynne** *G* 2215 come; *pa* **wan** won *G* 70; gained 1394; **wan to** got to, reached *Pe* 107, *G* 2231, ~ ... **into** got into C 140; *pa pl* **wonnen** brought *G* 1365; made (their) way C 882, 1374, 1577, 1777; won, gained *Pa* 237; *pa ppl* **wonne(n)** won, obtained C 1305, *G* 1379, 1386; brought *Pe* 32, *G* 831, 2091, 2415; begotten C 112; **is/was/are wonne(n)** has/had/have gone/come *Pe* 517, C 1004, 1669, *G* 461, 1365

wynnelych(e) *adj* lovely, delightful C 1807, G 980

wynter *n and adj* winter Pe 116, G 504, 726, 1382; the winter half of the year C 525, G 522, 530, 533; *pl* **wynter** years G 613

wypped (1) *pa ppl* wiped, polished G 2022

wypped (2) *pa* (of 'whippe') whipped, swiped G 2249*

wyrde *n* chance, course of events Pe 249, fate G 2134; **thy** ~ what has befallen you Pe 273; **his** ~ his fate G 1752, 2418; **as** ~ **then schaped** as fate then ordained Pa 247; *pl* **wyrdes** events (past and/or to come) that make up a personal history, fated course of life C 1224, G 1968; **caytiffe wyrdes** disasters that threatened to occur C 1605

wyschande *pres ppl* wishing (for), missing Pe 14; *pa* **wysched** wished Pa 462

wyse (1) *n* manner, way Pe 101, Pa 12, 304, G 185, 1836, 2048; guise or form or fashion of things Pe 133, G 2456; **on this** ~ in that way C 1063, G 1468, in the following manner C 327, Pa 358, 412, **on a wonder** ~ in a wondrous fashion Pe 1095, **on solemne** ~ in magnificent fashion, in state C 1171, **on fele** ~ in many different ways G 1653, *similarly* (**up**)**on ...** ~ C 268, 1432, Pa 238, 430, G 901, **in a ...** ~ G 2048, *with gen* C 271, 696, 1187, G 267, 2192; **upon a gret** ~ in an elaborate way G 2014, **upon thre/thrynn** **wyse(s)** in three ways C 1728, 1805

wyse (2) *adj* learned C 1555; well mannered C 1592; skilled in craftsmanship Pe 748; ~ **of** (C 1560), ~ **upon** (G 1605) knowledgeable about, skilled in; *as n* **that** ~ that sage C 1741; **wroght as the** ~ acted in his own best interests C 1319*

wyse (3) *v* show Pe 1135*; *pa* **wysed** sent C 453

wysse *v* guide, direct G 549, *subj* 739; ~ **yow therewith** tell you about that Pa 60; *pres* **wysses** guides, instructs C 1564

wyst(e) see **wit**

wyt *n* mind Pa 74; wits C 1422, 1701, G 402, 1087, understanding, wisdom Pe 294, 903, C 348, Pa 129, G 354, 2096; cleverness G 1394, 1533; meaning, sense C 1630; sleight, good plan of action G 677; *pl* **wyttes** wits C 515, G 1755, senses G 640, 2193, 2459; cf. **wit**

wyte *v* **to** ~ ... **is** is to be blamed C 76; *imp* **wyte** reproach, blame Pa 501

wyter, wyterly *adv* clearly, plainly C 1552, 1567; certainly, for sure C 171, Pa 330

wytered *pa ppl* informed, made aware C 1587

wytes *pres* looks G 2051

wyther *v* ~ **with** resist, oppose Pa 48

wyther-half *n* opposite side Pe 230

wytherly *adv* in a spirit of opposition, with antagonism Pa 74; with

enmity C 198

wytles(se) *adj* out of (his) senses C 1585; stupid *Pa* 113

wyttes see **wyt**

wyves see **wyf**

yare *adv* plainly *Pe* 834; fully *G* 2410

yark *v* appoint, apportion C 758; *pres* **yarkes** ordains *G* 2410; *pa ppl*

yarked made ready (for someone), provided C 1708; ordained C

652; **yarked up** set open *G* 820

yarm *n* wail, outcry C 971

yarrande *pres ppl* snarling, growling *G* 1595, 1724

yat see **gete**

yate *n* gate *Pe* 728, 1037, *G* 820, gateway C 796; *pl* **yates** *Pe* 1035 +

ydel *adj* without employment *Pe* 514, 515, 531, 533

ydropike *adj* suffering from dropsy or accumulation of watery fluid C 1096

ye (1) *pron* (direct and indirect object **yow**) you (plural) *Pe* 290&; (honorific) you (singular) *Pe* 257*&

ye (2) *inter* yea! yes! C 347, *G* 813, 1091, 1381, 1498, 1729, 1940

yede (*rhyme*: **yot** *Pe* 10, **yod** *G* 1146) *pa* (of 'go') went, passed *Pe*

1049, C 973, *G* 817, 1122, 1400, 2363, *pl* **yeden** *G* 1684; came,

issued *Pe* 713; moved C 432, was *G* 2333; *refl* **him yede** went *Pa*

355, *G* 815*; **yede his gate** went his way, made this journey *Pe*

526; **yedoun** went down *G* 1595

yederly *adv* promptly, readily C 463, *G* 453, 1215, 1485, 2325

yedoun see **yede**

yef *v* (variant of **gef**) give *G* 1964

yelde *v* (*pres* **yeldes**, *pl* **yelden**; *pa* **yelde**, *pl* **yolden**; *pa ppl* **yolden**)

hand(ed) over, give *G* 67, deliver C 665, *G* 2223, granted *G* 820;

bestows *G* 498; yielded up, restored C 1708; repaid, paid back *G*

453; repay, give in return *G* 1478; **yelde(s)/yelden ... ayayn**

repay(s), return(s) *G* 1478, 1981, 2325; *pres subj* **yelde** (may God)

repay, reward *G* 1038, 1963, 1263, 1292, 2056, 2410, 2441; *refl*

yield(ed), surrender(ed) *G* 1215, 1595; cf. **foryelde**

yelle *pres pl* cry out in pain *G* 1453

yellyng *vn* screaming C 971

yelpyng *vn* talk of heroic deeds *G* 491*; cf. **yolped**

yemes *pres* rules C 1493; *pa* **yemed** was in charge of C 464, 1242

yemen *n pl* yeomen, high-ranking commoners (used loosely as a non-

disparaging term of address to commoners, implying they are of

respectable status) *Pe* 535

yep *adj* fresh, lusty, vibrant *G* 60*, 105, 951, 1510; agile, prompt C

881; as *n* **the yep** the quick-witted man C 796, **yep** vigorous young

men *G* 284

yeply *adv* promptly *C* 665, 1708, *G* 1981, 2244

yere *n* year *Pe* 503+; **on** ~ in the year *Pe* 1079; *gen* **yeres** year's *G* 453, 1054, 1075, 1669, 1675, 1968, **yeres-yiftes** New Year's gifts *G* 67; *pl* **yeres** *C* 426, 526, *uninflected pl* **two yere** two years *Pe* 483, *C* 1192, **seven** ~ *C* 1453, *G* 613, 1382

yerne *v* desire, wish *G* 1526; *2s pres* **yernes** *C* 758; *pa ppl* **yerned** wanted *Pe* 1190, *G* 492; asked for, requested *C* 66

yerne *adv* swiftly *G* 498; readily *G* 1478

yernes *pres* runs, moves swiftly *G* 498, 529, *pl* **yornen** ran *C* 881

yet(te) *adv* yet, nevertheless *Pe* 19+; still *C* 517+; furthermore, in addition *Pe* 46+; so far, up to this time *Pe* 200+; *with reduced force* and at that *Pa* 153, 489; *with comp* even *C* 50, 96, 97

yete *v* grant; give, bestow upon *Pe* 558; grant a petition for *G* 776; *imp* **yete** yield, give *C* 842; *pa ppl* **yete** provided *Pe* 1061

yeye *v* cry out *G* 1215; *pa* **yeyed** called out *G* 67, cried *C* 846

yiftes *n pl* gifts

vis *inter* yes, indeed *Pa* 117, 347*, *C* 1113; certainly *Pe* 635

yisterday *adv* yesterday *G* 1485; *adj* of yesterday *C* 463; *n pl*

yisterdayes yesterdays, days that have passed *G* 529

ynde *n* indigo *Pe* 76, 1016, *C* 1411; *proper n* **Ynde** India *C* 1231, 1772

yod *pa* (variant of **yede**; used for rhyme) went *G* 1146, **yot** *Pe* 10

yokkes *n pl* yokes, teams of oxen *C* 66

Yol *n* Yuletide *G* 284, 500

yolden see **yelde**

yolped *pa* cried aloud *C* 846; cf. **yelpyng**

yomerly *adj and adv* doleful(ly), piteous(ly) *C* 971, *G* 1453

yon, yonde, yonder *dem adj* that/those over there *Pe* 693, *C* 721,

751, 772, *Pa* 506, *G* 678, 2144, 2440; *adv* **yonde** (*G* 1724*),

yonder (*C* 1617) over there

young(e) *adj* young *Pe* 412, 474, 535, *C* 783, 842, 881, *G* 89, 1510, 1526; as *n* young one *G* 951, young person; ~ **yere** New Year *G* 492

yore *adj* belonging to the past: ~ **fader** father of long ago, forefather (= Adam) *Pe* 322; *adv* (**ful**) ~ for a long time *G* 2114; **for longe** ~ for a very long time *Pe* 586

yore-while *adv* earlier *C* 842

yornen see **yernes**

yot see **yod**

youres *pron* yours *G* 1105, 1037, 1387, 1964; as *n* what belongs to you *G* 1815

yourselven, yowself *adj and pron* yourself *C* 863, *G* 350, *non-refl pron in oblique case* you *C* 340, *G* 1522, 1548, 1964, **of** ~ your own *G* 1267, 1394

yow see **ye**

yrn(e) *n* iron *G* 215; iron weapon *G* 2267*; *pl* **yrnes** pieces of armour

G 729

ythes *n pl waves C 430**; *Pa 147, 233*

yvore *n ivory Pe 178*

List of Names

In most cases, further information is available from the Notes to the lines cited.

Abdama Admah C 958

Abraham C 601&, **Abram** 647; *gen* **Abrahames** 650

Adam *Pe* 656, C 237, 258, G 2416

Agravayn a la dure mayn Agravain of the hard hand G 110

Ananie Hananiah C 1301

Anglesay Anglesey G 698

Aquiloun Aquilo (the north wind) *Pa* 133

Armene Armenia C 447

Arraby Arabia *Pe* 430

Arthur King Arthur G 26&; *gen* **Arthures** of Arthur, Arthur's G 29, 309, 2102, 2329, 2464, 2522

Arystotel Aristotle *Pe* 751

Azarie Azariah C 1301

Babyloyn Babylon C 1149, 1223, 1256, 1335, 1361, 1372–3, 1666

Baltazar Belshazzar C 1333&, *gen* C 1149, 1436; (= Daniel) C 1610

Barsabe Bathsheba G 2419

Bawdewyn Baldwin G 112

Belfagor Baalpeor C 1526

Belssabub Beelzebub C 1526

Belyal Belial C 1526

Bertilak de Hautdesert G 2445

Bethelen *n* Bethlehem C 1073

Boors Bors G 554

Bretayn, **Bretaygne** Britain G 14, 20, 25

Brutus (founder of Britain) G 2523, 2524, **Felix Brutus** G 13

Bydver Bedivere G 554

Caldye Chaldea C 1231, 1339, 1362, 1575, 1747; *adj* **Caldee**
Chaldean, of Chaldea C 1215, 1316, 1562, 1631; *n pl* **Caldees**
Chaldeans C 1774

Cam Ham (son of Noah) C 299
Camylot Camelot G 37
Clopyngnel Jeun de Meun C 1057
Cryst(e) (**Jesu Cryst** *Pe* 458) Christ *Pe* 55, 569, 776, C 23, 161, 972, 1067, G 596, 643, 762, 869, 1307; (*in blessings*) G 839, 1279, 1982, 2067, 2120; (*in oaths*) *by Cryst* G 674, 1938; *gen Crystes* Christ's *Pe* 383, 904, 1208, G 51; see also **Jesu**

Daniel the Old Testament prophet Daniel C 1157&; *also called Baltazar* C 1610
Dalyda Delilah G 2418
Daryus Darius C 1771, 1794
David the prophet David *Pe* 698, 920, *Pa* 119, G 2418
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Diana (Roman goddess) *Pa* 166
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Effraym (Mount) Ephraim *Pa* 463
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Ewrus Eurus (the east wind) *Pa* 133

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Gawan Gawain G 109&, **Gawayn** G 365&, **Wawan** G 343, 559, 906&; *gen Gawanes* G 1807
Gile St Giles G 1644
Gilyan Julian the Hospitaller G 774
God(e) *Pe* 314+, **Gog** G 390; (*in oaths*) G 1110, 1245, 1498, 2122, 2123, 2205, 2250; (*in blessings*) G 1535, 2073, 2239, 2429; *gen Godes* God's *Pe* 63+
Gomorra Gomorrah C 690, 722, 911, 957
Grece Greece *Pe* 231, G 2023
Gryngolet type of horse, (used as name for) Gawain's horse G 597, 748, 777, 2047, 2062, 2160, 2480
Guenore Guinevere G 74, 109, 2460, **Wenore** G 945*

Hestor Hector (one of Arthur's knights) G 2102
Holy Hed *n* place called Holyhead G 700

Israel the more northerly of the two Jewish kingdoms, as opposed to

- Judah in the south *Pa* 205; the lands of the Jews generally *C* 1179, 1294, *gen C* 1314; (= Jacob) *Pe* 1040
- Japh** Jaffa *Pa* 90
- Japheth** Japhet (son of Noah) *C* 300
- Jerico** Jericho (city to the north-east of Jerusalem) *C* 1216
- Jerusalem** *Pe* 792&, *attributive* 841; *C* 1159, 1180, 1235, 1432, 1441
- Jesu** (**Jesu Cryst** *Pe* 458) Jesus *Pe* 453, **Jesus** *Pe* 711, 717, 721, 820, *G* 774; see also **Cryst(e)**
- John** John the Evangelist *Pe* 383, 788, 836, 867, 984–5&, *G* 1788; *gen Saynt Johnes day* *G* 1021
- John** John the Baptist *Pe* 818
- Jonas** Jonah *Pa* 57&
- Jordan** the land of Jordan *Pe* 817
- Judee** (a) Judah (Jewish kingdom in the south of Palestine, as opposed to Israel in the north) *Pe* 922, 937, *C* 1170, 1180, 1432; (b) lands belonging to the Jews generally *Pa* 57, 61
- Lancelot** *G* 553
- Langaberde** (founder of Lombardy) *G* 12
- Logres** Loegria (a kingdom in Britain) *G* 691, 1055
- Loth** Lot *C* 772, 784, 798, 809, 817, 841, 853, 900, 913, 925, 936, 939, 977, 993, 1003; *gen Lothes* *C* 836, 887, 981
- Lucan** *G* 553
- Lumbardie** Lombardy *G* 12
- Lyonel** Lionel *G* 553
- Mador de la Porte** *G* 555
- Mahoun** Mohammed *Pa* 167
- Mambre** Mamre *C* 674, 778
- Mararach** (Mount) Ararat *C* 447
- Mary** (the Virgin) Mary *Pe* 383, 425, *G* 737, 754, 1769; (*in oaths and blessings*) *G* 1263, 1268, 1942, 2140
- Mathew** Matthew the Evangelist *Pe* 497, *C* 25, 51, *Pa* 10
- Medes** Medes, the people of Media (a kingdom to the north-east of Babylon) *C* 1740, 1771, 1793
- Mergot** Margot (a pagan deity) *Pa* 167
- Merlin** *G* 2448
- Mighael** Mishael *C* 1301
- Morgue la Faye** [fairy] Morgan le Fay *G* 2446, **Morgue the Goddes** *G* 2452
- Moyses** *gen* of Moses *Pa* 238
- Nabugo de nozar** Nebuchadnezzar *C* 1176, 1218&, **Nabugo** *C* 1226, 1233

Nabuzardan Nebuzardan C 1236, 1245, 1261, 1281, 1291, 1613

Neptune (god of the sea) *Pa* 166

Ninive (the city of) Nineveh *Pa* 66, 76, 95, 346, 352, 360

Noe Noah C 297&; *gen* **Noe** Noah's C 425

Palastyn Palestine, the Holy Land C 1177

Paradise the earthly Paradise, the Garden of Eden *Pe* 137, C 238, 704, 1007; heaven C 195, G 2473; ~ **erde/greve** the land/grove of (the earthly) Paradise *Pe* 248, 321

Perce Persia C 1772; **Perses** Persians C 1739

Peter (*oath*) by St Peter! G 813

Porros Porus C 1772

Poule Saint Paul *Pe* 457

Pymalyon Pygmalion *Pe* 750

Ragnel *Pa* 188

Reynarde Reynard (nickname for fox) G 1728, 1898, 1920; *gen* **Reynarde** Reynard's G 1916

Rome *Pa* 52, G 8

Romulus G 8

Salomon Solomon *Pe* 689, C 1286, 1453, G 625, 2417; *gen*

Salomones Solomon's C 1171

Samarye Samaria *Pa* 116

Samson G 2417

Sare Sarah (wife of Abraham) C 623, 649, 654, 660, 661, 666, 667

Satanas Satan, the devil C 1449

Segor Zoar C 926, 973, 986, 992

Sem Shem (son of Noah) C 299

Sodomas Sodom C 672&

Syboym Zeboim C 958

Syon Sion (a hill in Jerusalem) *Pe* 789, 868

Tarce Tarshish *Pa* 87, 100, 126, 424

Thanes (Hebrew name for the mountain of) Ararat C 448

Ticius G 11

Tolouse Toulouse C 1108; **tolouse** a fabric from Toulouse G 77

Torkye Turkey C 1232

Troye Troy G 1, 2525

Tuskan the Italian province of Tuscany (formerly Etruria) G 11

Tyntagelle Tintagel (in Cornwall) G 2465

Uryn Urien G 113

Uter Uther (King Arthur's father) G 2465

Vernagu (a god) *Pa* 165

Wales *G* 697

Wawan see **Gawan**

Wenore see **Guenore**

Wyrle *Wirral G* 701

Ynde *India C* 1231, 1772; **ynde** *n indigo Pe* 76, 1016, *C* 1411

Ysaye *Isaiah Pe* 797, 819

Ywan *Yvain G* 113, 551

Zedechyas *Zedekiah C* 1169

Zeferus *Zephyrus (god of the west wind) Pa* 470, *G* 517



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- 1 The manuscript is viewable online at <http://gawain.ucalgary.ca>.
- 2 See nn. to C [445–8](#), [984](#), [1015](#), [1018](#), [1029–32](#), [1035](#), [1047](#), [1472](#).
- 3 See the introduction to the French-text edition by Christiane Deluz (2000). The first dated MS is from northern France (1371). The work was probably written (in French) by an Englishman in Liège.
- 4 See nn. to C [924](#), [1015](#).
- 5 Wright 1960: 15.

- 6 See Scott 1996: I, 66–7.
- 7 Edwards 1997: 218–19.
- 8 Only in the text of *Sir Gawain* are there some minor linguistic peculiarities that could point to an intermediate stage of scribal copying somewhat further north in Cheshire (Putter and Stokes 2007: 489–90).
- 9 See Brewer 1966, Nicholls 1985.
- 10 See Elliott 1984 and 1997.

- 11 See Bowers 2001, Mann 2009.
- 12 Burrow 1993 ('*St Erkenwald* line 1').
- 13 See Barrett 2009.
- 14 See the marginal heading to Gower's *Chronica Tripertita* I.63.
- 15 See Savage 1931, Robertson 1968: 96.
- 16 See G 701–2 and n.
- 17 See Bennett 1983: 116.
- 18 Bennett 1983: 13.
- 19 Bennett 1983: 225–6.
- 20 See McIntosh et al. 1986: III, 38–9.

- 21 One of the few Middle English lyrics to have survived with music, 'Stabat iuxta Christi Crucem', was copied at St Werburgh's. Also from the late thirteenth century is a remarkable group of secular alliterative lyrics copied by a monk at Stanlow Abbey, Cheshire (Pickering 1992).
- 22 Cf. Turville-Petre 1977: 123–4.
- 23 See Robbins 1950, Youngs 2008.
- 24 On the Stanley poems, see most recently Barrett 2009, especially 172–86.

- 25 *St Erkenwald* has indeed sometimes been ascribed to the *Gawain* poet, but the evidence for common authorship is inconclusive.
- 26 See Burrow 1993 ('*St Erkenwald* line 1').
- 27 See Turville-Petre 1994: 163–6.
- 28 Nos. 112 and 116 in *Religious Lyrics of the Fourteenth Century*, ed. C. Brown (Oxford, 1924).
- 29 See McIntosh 1978: 138, n. 8.

³⁰ See Putter 2010.

³¹ For parallels between *Sir Gawain* and the romances of Hue de Rotelande, see p. 241 and notes to G 1107, 1133, 1190.

32 See n. to *Pe* 202.

33 See n. to *Pe* 1184.

34 Cf. Gordon, *Pearl* xiv–xvi.

35 It is similarly in the context of an inserted dream-vision that, in the *Confessio Amantis*, the dreamer is addressed as ‘John Gower’ (VIII.2908) and allusion made to his authorship of books of ‘vertu moral’ (VIII.2925–7). And it is in a dream sequence that Charles d’Orléans names himself (‘Charles, le duc d’Orlians’: *Songe en complainte* 181, 375, 549) and gives the year of composition, 1437 (413).

36 Elizabeth Thomas (1677–1731), *The Dream* 80.

37 *Ye/yow* was the plural of *thou/thee*, and was used when addressing more than one person, or, as here (like the French *vous*), as a polite form when addressing one person.

- 38 In *St Erkenwald* (another Cheshire poem) one likewise finds *what*, *why*, etc, spelled in the northern manner with *qu-*, but alliterating, unlike *cw-* derived words, on *w* (see 64, 133, 185–6) and never with *cw-* words.
- 39 Since *-e* would be elided before *and*, the final *-n* of *brayen* is needed to produce the inter-stress long dip required in the first half of the alliterative line (see pp. xxi and xxiv–xxv).

40 See Dobson and Harrison 1979: 42–44, and their discussion of Songs 10, 21 and 22, all three surviving with music (allowing verification of the syllable count). The first of these songs (c.1290) shows a comprehensive retention of final *-e*; in the last two (c.1420), historically justified *-e* is opportunistically used where metre requires it.

41 Sometimes the *-e* required by metre is an etymological *-e*, the word having ended in *-e* in Old English or French, or having acquired *-e* in Early Middle English (as is especially common in the case of feminine nouns, e.g. *blissë* (*Pe* 397) and *quenë* (*C* 1351)).

42 Unless otherwise indicated, all our examples in this section are taken from *Cleanness*.

43 See Duggan 1990.

44 In the Old English *Beowulf*, there is no such variation: the prefix *un-* always takes alliterative stress.

⁴⁵ Summarized in Duggan 1997: 222–6.

⁴⁶ See Cable 1991.

⁴⁷ See further Putter et al. 2007: 105–17; that book provides detailed coverage of all the metrical issues here raised.

48 To avoid confusion, the oblique cases of *thou* (always spelled *þe* in the MS) have been regularized to *thee*.

49 We have, for instance, supplied a final *-e* for weak adjective *fautleste* at *G* 2363a ('On the *fautleste freke*'); the other instances of final *-e* supplied to provide the a-verse with its long dip between the stresses mostly concern the inflectional *-e* the scribe has almost invariably omitted from the suffix *-lych* (see pp. xxiv–xxv): e.g. 'To this *frelyche fest*' at *C* 162a, 'To the *comlyche quene*' at *G* 469a.

⁵⁰ See Duggan 1977, Vaughan 1979.

⁵¹ Clear evidence of composition in quatrains is provided by the decorated initials (marking new narrative sections), which occur always after multiples of four: *Cleanness* lines 125, 193, 249, 345, 485, 557, 601, 689, 781, 893, 1157, 1357; and *Patience* lines 61, 245, 305, 409. (Of course, there are also larger initials for the first word of each of the poems.)

1 According to Fein 1997, this stanza form became fashionable after 1375.

2 Many words in *Pearl* are otherwise found at this date almost exclusively in alliterative verse, e.g. *wlonk* [splendid: 122, etc], *wynne* [delightful: 154, etc], *burn* [man: 397, etc], *heterly* [furiously: 402], *meles* (497, etc) and *warp* (879) in the sense of ‘speak(s)’, *carp* [words: 883], *lurked* as a verb of motion (978), *schafte* for shafts of light (982).

- 3 Elision of a word-final vowel before a word-opening vowel or unstressed *h*- is also normal, as in all ME verse; hence 'The apostel' would be pronounced 'Th'apost'l'.
- 4 On the occasional restoration of final *-e* required by the metre of *Pearl*, see Duggan 1996.

5 On the history of this topos, see Curtius 1953: 195–200.

6 Cf. *Romaunt of the Rose* 1556–7, where the pebbles shine so brightly as to resemble silver.

7 *MED stonden* v¹ 10d.

8 In Middle English the word, though not confined to actual infants, was normally applied to a young child.

9 Only in the last four lines of the poem does his *us* no longer attempt to group his human self with his beatified daughter.

NB: Footglosses are selective (see pp. xxxii–xxxiii); see the Glossary for words not included

1 **princes pay**: a prince's pleasure

4 **proved**: met with; but the father is speaking as a jeweller (cf. 241–300), and the technical sense of *prove* [assay] is also relevant **her**: her/its (n.)

11–12 **fordolked of luf-daungere Of**: badly wounded by frustrated separation in love for

14 **wayted**: looked (around), searched

15 **while**: at one time, in the past

17–18 'That does nothing but wring my heart tightly, and only makes my breast swell and become inflamed in misery'; **dos** governs **thrych** [*press upon, squeeze*] periphrastically ('does wring' = *wrings*) and **bolne** and **bele** causatively ('causes to swell and seethe')

- 19 **thoght me never**: it seemed to me there was never
21 **fele**: many (probably referring to ‘songs’)
26 **There**: where
27 **blayke**: white
29 **fede**: grey, unflourishing
30 **There**: where
31 **graynes**: grains, seeds (with play on the other ME sense ‘precious stones’)
32 **were** (*subj*) **elles**: would otherwise be
34–5 **might fayle not That**: could not fail in such a way that **spyces**:
spice-bearing plants
35–6 **up ne sponne Of**: should not shoot forth from; **sponne** *is past subjunctive of ‘spinnen’ [spring, spurt]*
39 **high sesoun**: major Church festival (n.)

- 41 'On the mound down which the pearl rolled' (**there**: where)
- 42 'Most bright and beautiful plants cast a shade'; **these** is *exophoric* (cf. 505 and n.)
- 45 **on to sene**: to look upon
- 47 **that worthy**: that excellent (one); *adjective for noun is one of the usages of alliterative verse that occur also in Pearl*
- 49 **hande**: hands
- 51 **devely**: dull, desolate **denned**: lodged, ensconced itself
- 52 'Although **resoun** [sense of what is right] suggested reconciliation to the situation'
- 56 **wraghte**: 'worked', throbbed painfully
- 57 **flaght**: turf
- 58 **hernes**: brains, head
- 59 **slepyng slaght**: sudden fit of sleep

62 **balke**: mound

64 **there**: where

66 'But I knew myself to be where a range of steep hills divided', i.e. in a valley, as the river encountered at 107 suggests

77 **on slydes**: slides thereon (i.e. on the trees)

78 **trylle**: shake, move to and fro **tynde**: small branch, twig

79 **of glodes**: from clear patches of ground between the trees (i.e. from sunlit spaces)

89 **in fere**: together

91 **sytole**: citole (a stringed instrument played by plucking)

gyternere: player of the gittern (an earlier and smaller form of the guitar)

92 **Her**: their **mirthe**: music **retrete**: reproduce

97 **So all was dubbed**: thus was everywhere beautified

98 **That frith there**: that woodland where

99 **derthe**: dearness, magnificence

102 **so big that did me deres**: so big that it caused me difficulties

107 **schore**: bordering slope

108 **hit**: its

112 'With a whispering sound, moving straight on'

113 **stonden stones stepe**: (a) bright stones are set, (b) bright gems shine (see pp. 11–12)

114 'Which glowed and flashed like a ray of light passing through glass'

115 **strothe-men**: men of this (dank and dreary) world (**strothe**: marshy scrubland)

119 **That**: so that **of**: with

121 **down**: upland, hill

123 **Bylde**: strengthened

125 **Doun after**: down along

126 **bredful**: brimful

127 **floty**: river-watered

129–32 'As Fortune (generally) **fares** [behaves] where she **fraynes** [makes trial (of her powers over someone)]: whether she **sende** [*subj* may send] **solace** [happiness] or else **sore** [grief], the **wye** [man] to whom she **waynes** [sends, directs] whatever it is she wills (of joy or pain) **hittes** [gets] to have always more and more'; i.e. it is usually not in half measures that things tend to go well or ill for a man

134 **Then:** than

136 **gladnes:** delights

138 **over gayn:** on the opposite side of

139–40 ‘I **hoped** [thought, surmised] the water might be an ornamental device, created by **meres** [lakes] among **mirthes** [pleasure-spots]’

141 **slente:** slope

142 **mote:** chateau, castle **merked wore:** was sited; **wore**, *a form of ‘were’, is subjunctive after hoped*

144 **me longed:** longing came upon me (literally, ‘it longed me’; **long-** *is an impersonal verb*)

146 ‘I desired to see (the territory) on the other side of the water’; **lyst** *is an impersonal verb*

147 **there:** where

148 **ferre londe:** land on the farther side

149 ‘I paused to look around me’

153 **me thoght**: it seemed to me; **thoght** is *past tense of 'thinke' [seem], not 'thenke' [think]*

154 **there**: where **wynne**: delightful

157 **con ... adaunt**: subdued, overmastered

161 **faunt**: child (see pp. 12–13)

163 **bleaunt**: mantle (see footgloss to 197–204)

165 **that man con schere** that one has cut (i.e. which has been cut into glistening gold thread)

172 'As, a little before that time, used so to do'

174 **brunt**: assault, blow

- 179 'That stabbed my heart into a disoriented and stunned state'
181 **More then me lyst**: more than it pleased me, more than I wished
184 **hende**: obedient
185 **hoped**: thought, suspected **gostly**: supernatural
187 'Lest she, whom I descried there, should escape from me'
190 **seme**: becomingly **slyght**: sleek in texture
193 'Pearls of royal value set (in her costume)'
195 'When that lily-fresh creature'

197–204 The girl is dressed in the ceremonial costume of a fourteenth-century lady of rank: she wears a mantle or **bleaunt** (163) over a *surcote ouverte* (197–8), i.e. **beau mys** [fine overgarment] cut away at the sides (198), where the garment worn underneath, the **kyrtel** (203), would be visible; this under-**kyrtel**, which is here **of self sute** [of a matching colour], would also be seen at neck, lower arms and hemline; the jewels which often embellished fashionable costumes (especially the *surcote*) are here pearls

198 **bounden**: set

201 **lappes large**: long sleeves

205–6 **pyght coroune ... Of margarys**: crown set with pearls

209 **werle** ?circlet, headdress

210 ‘It **leke** [enclosed, framed] her **lere** [face], having encircled her completely’ (n.)

211 **sad for**: solemn enough for

212 **blaght**: bleached, made white

215–16 **wonted non Of precious perles in porfyl pyght**: lacked nothing (of the colour) of the precious pearls that were were set in the ornamental border (of her garment)

217–18 Pearls bestud the **poyned** [wristband, cuff] of the under-
kyrtel (visible below the fuller sleeves of the *surcote*) and every
hemme [edge] of the overgarment or *surcote* – i.e. the edges above
the **hande** [hands], at the **overture** [opening at the neck] and at its
cut-away **sides** (see footgloss to 197–204)

220 **burnist white**: decorated with white stones

222 **so sure**: very firmly

223 **dryly demme**: grow completely dim

224 ‘Before the mind could comprehend its extent’

226 **saverly sawe**: comprehending word

228 **there**: where

230 ‘On the opposite side of the water came down the slope
(bordering the stream)’; the **schore** [steep slope] is distinct from the
water’s edge (**brymme**, 232)

231 **hethen into Grece**: from here to Greece (cf. *G* 2023)

233 **me nerre then**: nearer (in kinship) to me than

235 **profered me speche**: invited me to converse

236 **in wommon lore**: according to female etiquette

237 **Caght of:** took off

239–40 ‘Well was it for me that I had ever been born (in that it was given to me) to answer that sweet (creature) set in pearls’

243 ‘Bewailed by myself (i.e. alone) at night’; *with linking alliteration on n in myn one and nighte*

244 **longing:** grief, anxiety **layned:** concealed

245 **thou me aglyghte:** you slipped away from me

247 **lyght:** ‘alighted’, placed, set

250 **done me:** placed me, put me **daunger:** frustrated separation from a loved one

257–60 The girl's point is that it is an abuse of language (257) to characterize as **all away** [quite gone] (258) a jewel which the jeweller can see to have been safely deposited in the elegant jewel-casket constituted by this **garden** (259–60)

260 **gay**: fine, splendid

261 **play** [to pass the time pleasantly in enjoyment and recreation] had none of its modern associations with children and games; the girl never speaks as the child her father remembers

262 **There ... here**: here where **com**: came

263–4 **Here were**: here would be (*were is subjunctive, as also in 264*)

265 **if thou schal**: if you are going to

266 **for**: because of **thee was lef**: was dear to you

267 **Me think thee**: it seems to me that you (are)

268 **resoun bref**: small cause, slight matter

269 **that thou lestes**: what you lost

270 **as kynde hit gef**: as nature gave it (to do), according to nature's law

273–5 'And you have called your fate a thief (for taking a pearl, from you), while it has actually created for you something out of nothing; you are (therefore) blaming a remedy for being your injury'

276 **no kynde jueler**: an unnatural jeweller

277 **gest**: visitant

282 **done out of dawes**: removed from life, dead

283 **Now have I**: now that I have **ma fest**: make festival, rejoice

285–6 **And love my Lord ... That** and praise my Lord ... who; **love**
= 'praise', not 'love', which in this MS is spelled 'luf', 'lof' or 'lovy'

287–8 **Now were I at yow ... I were**: If I were now beside you ... I
would be

291 'Three things have you said in one speech'

294 'Your tongue rushed ahead of your understanding'

297 **An other**: a second (thing); **other** *often preserved its earlier sense of*
'second'

299 **fre**: noble, fine

300 'That (i.e. pass the water) can no jeweller, however joyful'

301 to prayse: to be praised

302 'Who readily grants (only) what he has seen with (his own) eye';
loues, cf. 308, *is an aphetic form of 'allows'*

303 to blame: to be blamed

304, 305 That: who

306 did your flesh to die: caused your fleshly form to perish

307–8 'You (men) rate His words as meaningless, you who **loues**
[grant the validity of] nothing unless you see it'

309–12 that is ... To leve ... Bot that his one skylle: it is ... to
believe ... except that which his reason alone; the girl's point is, not
that the dreamer should *not* have trusted the evidence of his own eyes,
but that it was 'discourteous' (303) to God to believe in His promise of
life after death (305) *only* when it received such visible confirmation

313–14 'Judge now for yourself if you did speak as a (mere) man
should (when he) addresses words to God'

315 schal: are going to; *auxiliary 'will' and 'shall' had different
modalities: the former implied volition, the latter futurity or compulsion*

- 316 **Me think thee burde**: it seems to me that it would behove you
- 317 **And yet**: and even so
- 321 **hit** refers back to **corse** [body] in 320
- 325 **Demes thou me**: if you condemn me
- 327 **Now have I founde that**: now that I have found that which
- 328 **Schal**: must (as also at 329 and 332)
- 331 'What end is served by treasure except to make a man weep'; '*gar*'
is a northern causative verb
- 334 **man me fleme**: I am put to flight (literally 'one puts me to flight')
- 336 **Bot**: except for
- 339–40 'Because of the **dyn** [noise] (he makes) in grief over **lures lesse** [losses of a lesser nature], many a man often deprives himself of (what is of) greater (importance)'

341 **Thee oghte better**: it would better behove you, i.e. you ought rather

342 **love**: praise (cf. 285)

343 **not a cresse** is the ME equivalent of ‘not a straw’

344 **Who nedes schal thole**: you who must needs endure (what is visited upon you)

345 ‘For, though you dance about (wildly) like any (hunted or wounded) doe’

347 **When thou no ferre may**: once you can go no further; *verb of motion omitted after modal*

348 **Thou most abide that**: you will have to undergo whatever

349 **Deme Dryhtyn**: (if you) judge the Lord **ever**: always **adyte**: indict

350 **Of** [out of, from] **the way**: from His path

352 **be** (*subj*) **never blythe**: were never to be happy

353 **Stynt of thy strot**: (if you) stop your wrangling

354 **blythe**: good will

355, 357 **may**: is able to, has the power to

355 **bite**: arouse

356 **That**: so that

357 **lythe**: assuage

358 The general sense is clearly ‘and mitigate your pains’, but the line is problematic (n.)

359 'For, whether you are distraught or behave wildly, (or) grieve and hide (your feelings) ...'; *the verbs are concessive subjunctives*

362 'Let there be no (occasion of) anger to my Lord', i.e. 'Let my Lord not take offence'

363 **spornande** [stumbling] **in spelle**: tripping up (i.e. making errors) in speech

364 **with mysse remorde**: tormented by bereavement

365 '(And my grief gushed out into words with the same uncontrollable force and profusion) as surging water issues from a spring'

366 'I refer myself in all respects to His clemency'

368 **endorde**: precious one

371–2 'You ended the hostility between me and sorrow, (you) who were before that time the basis of all my joy'

374 **bigger**: stronger (of the two)

375 'From the time that you were delivered from every peril'

377 'Now that I see it, my pain eases'

379 'May God forbid we should now be at odds'

382 **and maneres mysse**: and (I) lack (gracious) manners

383–4 'But the mercy (extended to human inadequacies) of Christ, and of Mary and Saint John, are the grounds for all the confidence I have'

385 **In blisse ... blent** integrated into a life of bliss

386 **all mornyf mate** completely overcome by grieving

388 **ofte** (*adj*) **harmes hate**: frequent and hot harms

389 **now**: now that

395–6 '(Since it is) the main highway down which my joy proceeds (to its object), it (i.e. the honour and happiness of your condition) is at the foundation of all my happiness'; (**gate** [road] and *yate* [gate] are distinct in this MS; the 'high road' was the main public road, protected by the laws of the land)

397 **blisse ... mot thee bityde**: may bliss befall you

399 'And (you are now) welcome to walk about and linger here'

403 **for to chyde**: *'for' preceding 'to' + infinitive is a metrical filler* (see p. xxv)

405 **place**: place of residence, mansion

407–8 **My Lord the Lamb ... That**: my Lord the Lamb ... who

410 'You would like to know the nature of it'

413 **godhede**: goodness, magnanimity

417–18 **And sesed in ... His lef is**: and His beloved is invested with full legal possession of ... (**sesed** is a term from property law; **His lef** refers immediately to the girl herself, but also more generally to any soul 'beloved of God', who will similarly be invested (as His 'spouse') with full possession of His whole **heritage** [all that is by hereditary right His])

423–4 **Art thou ... That ... schal**: are you ... to whom ... must

425 that grace of grewe: from whom grace grew, i.e. from whom Christ – who restored man to grace – was born (the dreamer wonders how his daughter can be queen of heaven (415), when that title was commonly bestowed on Mary)

426 ‘Who, from the flower of virginity, bore a child’ (the virgin-mother topic is expressed in botanical imagery: the child is as the fruit that ‘grew’ (425) from out the blossom or flower of Mary’s virginity)

427–8 ‘Who could remove the crown from her, unless she (the remover) surpassed her (Mary) in some excellent quality?’

429–30 The phoenix was a type of **synglerty** [uniqueness] because there was always only one in existence (it was fabled to cremate itself at death and rise anew from its own ashes); **dousour** [sweetness, loveworthiness] likewise alludes to the phoenix, the fragrance of whose cremation (in a nest constructed of sweet-smelling wood and spices) was famous (see *Phoenix* 192–216)

431 ‘Which (i.e. the phoenix) flew without blemish from its Creator’

432 the quene of courtaysye is a rendering of the title *regina gratiae* given to the Virgin Mary in theological contexts

434 folde up her face: with her face upturned

435 Makeles [mate-less] is here used in the strict sense (Mary was a virgin mother) and in the larger one (matchless, peerless)

437 con restay: paused

439 pray: spoils, gains

440 'But (there are) no supplanters in this place'; the girl is responding to her father's assumption that possession of a crown must imply its 'removal' from someone else (427)

443 'Yet she will drive out no one from their hereditary rights'; the Virgin is an 'empress' (441) too gracious and courteous (444) to deprive her subordinate rulers of the crowns that mark their 'inheritance' (cf. 417), as blessed souls, of the divine kingdom

446 'Has a property (i.e. attribute) inherent in it'

449–52 'And yet shall never depose anyone else, but each one (is) glad of what others have, and would (wish that) their crowns were worth five times as much, if their amendment (i.e. any increase in the sovereignty betokened by the crowns) were possible'

453 **lady** was not merely a polite term for 'woman', but the female equivalent of an '(over-)lord'; **my lady** thus acknowledges subordination to Mary's rank as 'mistress' of heaven

457 'In (the mutual charity of) courtesy, as Saint Paul says ... '

460 **his body**: its body, i.e. the body

462 **longande lym to**: body-part belonging to/forming part of **myste**
(*dialect form*): might

463 **Then loke what**: then see if

464 **thy lymmes bytwyste**: between the various parts of your body

465 **gryste**: (teeth-)gnashing, resentment

466 **bye**: ring

467–8 ‘Even so do we (in heaven) respond only with love and pleasure
to the king or queen (which each soul is), out of (the mutual charity
of) courtesy’

470 **be** (*subj after ‘leve’ [believe]*) **yow among**: are (to be found)
among you

471 **my speche that yow ne greve**: let my words not offend you;
that *was often used to introduce a wish*

474 ‘In representing yourself – who were so young – as a queen’

477 **his lyves long**: throughout his life

478 ‘In order to buy for himself (heavenly) bliss through (the price of)
physical suffering’

480 ‘Than (to be) crowned king by (God’s) graciousness’

- 481 'Such graciousness is too **fre** [generous] in its operation'
- 483 This provides the first indication that the girl died in infancy (**in our thede** [nation, land]: i.e. on earth)
- 485 'Nor never (knew) neither Pater Noster nor Creed'; **couthes** is auxiliary 'could' in 484, but governs **Pater ne Crede** as independent verb 'knew' in 485 (n.)
- 488 **wrythe so wrong away**: turn off course in so wrong a direction
- 489–90 'To hold the **astate** [rank] of countess in heaven, **damysel** [young lady], would be splendid, by my faith'
- 491 **lady**: i.e. noblewoman (see footgloss to 453)
- 492 **Hit is to dere a date**: it is too dear a limit (i.e. it oversteps the limits of any plausible evaluation of the girl's 'worth'); the contextual meanings of the refrain word **date** vary in this section but are all related to the basic senses of 'terminus' or 'point or extent of time' (*OED date* n² 4 and 5)
- 493 **no date of**: no limit to (reinforcing **all** at 495: the dreamer has implied (488, 492) that God appears sometimes to do what is *not* 'good' or 'just')
- 495 **trauthe** [justness] refers in ME to moral rather than factual truth (for which *sooth* was generally used in ME); cf. **right** [rightfulness, justice] at 496
- 497 **your** (*pl*, *not honorific*): i.e. of you mortals

498 **sothfol**: authentic, truthful **of**: about, concerning

499–500 ‘In an exemplum (i.e. parable), He did most justly estimate (rewards due from Him), and makes of it (i.e. the situation in the parable) an analogy for the bright (realm of) heaven’

501 **My regne ... on hyght**: my realm on high

502 **I wate**: indeed; **wate** is a variant of ‘wot’ [*know*] (cf. 201)

503–4 ‘The due point of the time of the year was (now) come: the season was now the all-important one (in which) to work the vineyard’

505 ‘That season of the year (is one) labourers know well’ (i.e. they know it is a busy one, when work is to be had); **these** is used in a *generalizing sense*

512 **man hit clos**: make it secure (i.e. securely enclosed, to prevent damage by animals or trespassers)

513 **under**: *undern*, 9.00 a.m. **to marked tos**: betakes himself to the market-place

514 ‘And he finds men not yet employed (still waiting to be hired) standing at that place’

516 ‘Do you not know of any end to this day?’, i.e. ‘Have you no sense of urgency in finding work for the day?’

517 'Before the daytime hither have we come'

518 'Such was the answer all of them together found'

522 **made hit toght**: made a firm bargain

523–4 'Whatever reasonable wage is run up by nightfall I will pay to you, with all honesty'

528 'Until the day had well nigh passed its closing point' (**while**: until)

529–30 'At the period of day of evensong, one hour before the sun would go down'

533 **this dayes long** (*gen of measurement*: cf. 477): all day long

534 'They said their pay was nowhere ready'; i.e. they are not doing any work because no one has agreed to pay them for any

536 **that that ye moun**: that which you may, i.e. what you can

539 'He summoned them to receive their pay'

541 **con know**: acknowledged, i.e. responded to

542 **Called**: he called; *omission of pronoun subject*

544 **reprene**: reproach

547 **the last that standes lowe**: i.e. the last to enter the vineyard
(who has thus worked the fewest hours), at the bottom of the row

548 **Til ... that**: until **the first**: the first to enter the vineyard

549 **the first**: the first-comers

551–2 ‘These (i.e. the latest-comers) for only one hour did exert
themselves; it seems to us to be due to us to receive more (than they
do)’; **think and oghe** *are both impersonal verbs*

553 **us think so**: so it seems to us

555 **Then**: than

556 ‘And you cause them to match us’, i.e. you create an equivalence,
in pay, between them and us

558 **no waning**: ‘no reduction (in the pay due to you)’ **yete**: give

559 **that is thyn owne**: that which is your own (i.e. the agreed wage
of one penny)

560 **And:** if **agrete:** in all, all told

563 'Further than the contract (i.e. anything beyond the covenanted terms) cannot be sued for'; *on the construction of is not to plete*, see footgloss to G 356

565 'Moreover, is not gifting a lawful thing for me to do?'; no wage has been agreed with the later-comers, and so the money paid to them is here characterized as a free 'gift'

566 **myne:** my own (property) **me likes:** pleases me

567 'Or is it rather that your eye is raised towards wickedness' (n.)

568 **For:** because **non byswykes:** (I) deceive/cheat no one (cf. 544)

569 **skyfte:** ordain

570 **that strikes:** the one who runs (to the finish) first

572 **mykes:** companions, intimates (n.)

573 **her part aye pikes:** always get their share

574 **com:** came **little wore:** were of low status; the other meaning of **little** [small, young] is also relevant, since the girl identifies herself with those who did not labour long in the 'vineyard' (= world)

575 'And although their toil slides away to little effect'

576 **the more:** the greater (contrasted with **little** in 574–5)

- 578 **lyves blom**: excellence of life, pre-eminence (see *MED blom c*)
- 579 **Then**: than
- 580 'To ask for judgement by the way of justice', i.e. if they asked to be judged according to strict justice
- 581 'Although I began (service) almost only now', i.e. although my 'labour' had only just begun
- 582 **com**: came
- 585 **other**: others **toke more tom** [time]: i.e. were there longer
- 587 **yet**: as yet, up to now **nome**: took, received
- 588 'And perhaps will not (receive anything) for a few more years'
- 590 'Your words seem to me not in accord with justice'
- 591 **right**: righteousness, justice **evermore rert**: established in perpetuity
- 592 **bot a fable**: only a fiction
- 594 **determynable**: conclusive
- 595 **as his desert**: according to his deserts
- 596 **pertermynable**: (justly) adjudicating
- 597–8 'If you were to come to payment before him who stood steadfast throughout the whole day'

599–600 ‘Then the lesser in work (would be) the more qualified to receive (his pay), and by however much the less, (by so much) the more’

601–2 ‘ “In God’s kingdom more or less are not an issue,” said that worthy one’

603 Cf. 546

604 **his rewarde**: the regard in which he is held, i.e. his standing or importance

605 **chych**: niggard

606 ‘Whichever He may deal out, the soft or the hard’, i.e. whether it is favour or punishment He gives

607 **as water of diche**: as (plentifully) as water (pours) from a ditch (acting as a drain or gutter)

608 ‘Or like streams from the deep whose current never changed direction’

609–12 ‘Large are the freedoms and privileges of the man who ever bowed to Him who delivers from (the penalties of) sin (i.e. exclusion from heaven); to such people no degree or kind of bliss will be barred, for the grace of God is ample enough (to make up for their lack of deserving)’

613 **motes, me for to mate:** argue in order to confound me
615 **that com to late:** who came too late in the day
616 **lowere:** wage, payment
617–19 **abate** (*pa pl of 'abide'*) ... **That:** (who) persevered (in righteousness) ... (to such a degree) that
618 **Ever so holy:** always most holy
619 **by sum kyn gate:** by some kind of way, in one way or another
620 **sumtyme:** at one time or another
622 **woghe:** evil
623 **moste** (*pa pl of 'mot' [must]*) **hem then stere:** then had to take charge of them
625 Though **inogh** could bear its modern sense of 'enough', here it probably has its other ME sense of 'a great deal, plenty' **innocent:** i.e. an innocent child
626 **by line:** directly, at once
627 **dyssente:** descend
628 'It is at this point (i.e. at baptism) that they are brought into the vineyard (of Christendom)'; those who died within the age of innocence are identified with the shortest-servers of the parable
630 'Does decline towards the night of death'; the image is that of the sun declining towards its setting point

631–2 ‘The gracious Lord then pays those of His labourers who never committed any wrong before (**ere then** [than]) they departed’ (*the relative clause of 631 is in apposition with His hyne in 632*); contrast 622

634 **alow** [recognize or admit as valid] was a word with legal associations

635 **Yis** (more emphatic than *Yea*, the normal form of the affirmative): yes, indeed; certainly **at the firste fyne**: at once and fully

639 **Our forme fader**: our first father (i.e. Adam) **hit** [it] refers to **blisse parfyt** (638)

640 **that ... upon**: upon which (cf. 425 and 656)

643 **helle hete**: hell’s heat; **helle** is *here an old feminine genitive*

645 ‘But for that there came **as tite** [at once, promptly] a remedy’; **bote** [remedy, amends] was a term regularly applied to the redemption, the ‘remedy’ for original sin, effected by the crucifixion of Christ

647 **wynne**: lovely

648–9 **inogh** probably bears at 648 its sense of ‘enough, sufficiently’ (i.e. to meet the heavy penalties of the **plyt** [plight, crisis] (647) of original sin)’ and at 649 its other sense of ‘plentifully, abundantly’

650 **of**: from

652 deth secounde: second death (a translation of the phrase *mors secunda* used in the Book of Revelation, where it refers to the obliteration of the damned at Judgement Day: see e.g. Rev. 20:14–15), i.e. spiritual death in Hell, following the ‘first’ or physical death of the body

654–5 That in **654** and **655** both refer back to **water (653) glayve:** spear (n.)

656 That ... with: with which

658–9 ‘(Standing) between us and bliss except that which He removed (i.e. the penalty of original sin) and which is rectified in a blessed hour (i.e. when original sin is washed away in baptism)’

662 That: who **new:** anew **if him repente** (*impers subj*): if it repent him, i.e. if he repents

663 syt: grief

664 the payne thereto is bent the penance which is assigned to it (i.e. to his sin); *omission of relative pronoun*

665 resoun: justice **of ... rave:** deviate from

670 **be thurgh mercy to grace thryght** [thrust]: be conveyed to grace through the impetus provided by (God's) mercy

672 'Is safe (= gains salvation) through guiltlessness *and* justice'; i.e. the innocent, never having incurred any penalties, is saved through justice, not **mercy** (670)

674 **Two men**: i.e. two kinds of men **by skylle** [reason]: logically

676 **harmles** [guiltless] is an English equivalent of *in-nocent* (which itself strictly means 'un-harming') **Him tille**: to Him

680 **Himself**: i.e. the asker of the question **dille**: at a loss

681 'He who did no harm **ille** [wrongly] with his hands', i.e. the man whose hands are clean

683 'Will there fix his feet for ever'

684 **right**: justice

685 **also sertayn**: just as certainly

686 **proper pyle**: excellent castle (= heaven)

687–8 **takes ... glaveres**: *northern dialect present plurals* (see p. xviii)

her [their] *shows switch from generalized or indefinite singular (685) to plural* (cf. 609–11)

689 **Of**: with respect to **saw**: understood

690 'How he acquired a wise guide' (the guide is Wisdom) (n.)
691 **By ... con him strayn:** kept him to, kept him within
693 **As who says:** as if to say
697 **yet:** in addition (i.e. to the text cited in the previous verse)
699 **dome:** judgement
700 'For no one living can be proved just in your sight'
702 **There:** where
703 'If you adduce justice, you may find yourself taken (i.e. caught out)'
704 'According to this text (see 699–700) that I have noticed'
705–7 **He ... Gyve:** may He ... grant
709–10 'Whoever can read rightly, let him look upon the Book (= the Scriptures) and be informed'
711 **in arethede:** among the nations of old

- 715 **let be hem bede:** bade them desist
716 ‘And with their words restrained a great many (of them)’
718 **Do way:** have done, stop **tyght:** draw, come
719 **To such:** i.e. to persons exemplified by children
721 **mylde:** mild ones (= the children)
723 **Bot:** unless
724 **com:** would he come
725 **Harmles:** innocent, guiltless (see footgloss to 676) **true:** without guile **undefylde** uncorrupted
726 **sulpande** polluting; the verb is always used of metaphorical dirt, i.e. of the soiling effects of sin
727 ‘When there knock such (souls) at (the entrance to) the building’
729 **There is the blisse:** (into) where the bliss is
730 **soght thurgh:** sought (to purchase) by means of

732 To bye him: in order to buy for himself **was:** which was; *omission of relative pronoun*: cf. 664 (the reference is to the parable of ‘the pearl of great price’: Matthew 13:45–6)

734 The jueler gave for: for which the jeweller gave; *omission of relative pronoun*

739 were: i.e. while they lived on earth

740 hit stode: its position (this breast-pearl – now identified with and a symbol of the biblical ‘pearl of great price (= heavenly bliss)’ – is described at 221–8)

744 thy perle mascelles: i.e. the pearl (= salvation) of the parable

745 in: i.e. dressed in, decked with

746 the perle of pris: i.e. the pearl on her breast, now conflated with ‘the pearl of great price’ (cf. 740)

747 thee: for you

748 That ... he: he who

749–52 The point is that the girl’s beauty exceeds what could be produced or conceptualized in the mortal world by nature (749), art (750) or philosophy (751–2)

752 'Spoke about the nature of such *properties*' (a philosophical term for the attributes of a substance – such as the colour and **havyng** [demeanour] (754) the father proceeds to marvel at)

755–6 **what kyn offys Beres the perle so mascelles**: what sort of state (is it that) bears (as its badge) the pearl so spotless (n.)

760 **semed**: would have seemed/appeared

767 **corounde**: crowned me

770 **reiates**: attributes of royalty, splendid appurtenances

771 **thing**: creature, being

775–6 The father has in mind female saints, martyrs, recluses, etc, whose devotion (demonstrated by their voluntary **stryf** [affliction]) might have earned them a better claim to the marriage

779 **All only thyself:** all by yourself

784 **then sayd I not:** I did not add (when I referred to myself as spotless)

786 '(A) company of a hundred and forty-four thousand'

794 The girl here responds directly to the question asked at 771

798 **Pitously:** in a moved and/or moving way

799 **man con quelle:** 'one did kill', i.e. was killed

803 **query**: complaint, protest

806 **with boyes bolde**: by presumptuous churls (*boy* was usually derogatory)

810 **on to beholde**: to look on

811–12 ‘Because of (man’s) sin, He set no value on His own life, (He) who never had any (sin) Himself **to wolde** [to wield, in His possession]’; the reference (as at 807–8, 814 and 816) is to the doctrine of atonement: in suffering the crucifixion, Christ vicariously paid the penalty of original sin

813–14 **He let Him flye and folde, And brede**: He allowed Himself to be lacerated and bowed down and stretched out; the reference is to the scourging, the bearing of the cross, and the crucifixion itself

818 **Thereas**: where **Saynt John**: i.e. John the Baptist

819 **acorded to Ysaye**: were in accord with those of Isaiah (i.e. in characterizing Christ as a lamb)

820 **to-him-warde**: towards him (cf. 981)

823 **drye**: grave

824 'In which the whole world has been active'

826 **Whether**: however, nevertheless

827–8 **His generacyoun ... That**: the origins of Him ... who

830–31 'Was twice **taken** [seen] as a lamb, according to the reliable testimony of each prophet (Isaiah and John the Baptist)'

833 **The thrid tyme**: i.e. the third time that Christ figures as a lamb in Scripture

835 **there**: where, around which

838 **There**: where, upon which **in seme**: at the place where a book or scroll opens

841 **peche**: patch (of fur)

843 **That ... on**: (patch) upon which

844 **For**: because of **ronk**: abundant

847 **store**: great number (of spotless souls) **feche**: should fetch

849 **we wolde were fyf**: we would wish to be five

850 **so God me blesse**: so may God bless me

851–2 I.e. the honour attached to the status of ‘wife’ is (paradoxically) increased, not reduced, in proportion with the numbers of those raised to it, who act to multiply objects of love rather than of rivalry

853 **non**: no one

853–4 **us ... That**: to us who

855–6 ‘For those who wear the crest (= crown) of pearls could never give their minds to **mote** [moot, contention]’

858 **ye** (*pl pron*): i.e. you mortals **withouten rest**: without repose, unquietly

860 ‘Our confidence is based firmly on one death’ (i.e. on one death alone – that of the body (858), not to be followed by ‘the second death’ (652) of the soul)

864 **ones honour yet never the lesse**: the honour of any one of us not thereby the less

- 865 **les**: false, untrue **farande**: fine
866 **in wro**: in a passage
867 **Him stande**: standing
873 **hue**: loud cry
874 'Like the **laden** [voices] of many waters hurried on in a rapid course' (n.)
878 **were** (*subj after althagh*): was
880 'Which was beautifully impressive to listen to'
884 **modes**: musical phrases, tunes
887 **sad**: solemn, grave (cf. 211)
888 **never the lesse**: i.e. without pause or drop in volume because of that (namely, the solemn presence they were in)

890 **For:** despite

892 'Except the retinue that follows the Lamb'; *singular noun with collective sense followed by plural verb*

893 **boght fro the erthe aloynte:** redeemed from the earth and distanced from it

895 **hit are:** they are

896 **As:** i.e. because (they are)

898 **distresse:** coercion

900 **never the lesse:** and that will never be any less the case

901–2 **Never the lesse let be my thonk ... thagh I appose:** Let not my thanks (for your instruction) be lessened by the fact that I **appose** [put a question]

903 **I schuld not:** it would not be right for me to **tempte:** test for the purpose of verification (n.)

904 **To ... that art ichose:** you who have been chosen for ...

907 **bides:** bidest; *northern inflection* (see p. xviii)

908 'Where the joy of life may never be lost'

911 **bustwys**: coarse, rude **blose**: ?uncouth person

912 'Let my request (for information) succeed none the less because of that fact'

914 **be to done**: may (properly) be done (see footgloss to G 356)

915 **As** introduces a conjuration

917 **ye** is plural (as at 918, 923), referring to the whole **meyny** (925) of which the girl is a member, as do the **ye/yow** forms in the following stanza; when the girl is addressed as an individual, the singular **thou** form is used (919, 925, 935, etc)

918, 920, **there**: where

921 **hone**: be situated

925 **thou cones of mele**: you speak of

926 **thryght**: in a throng

928 **Yow** (*oblique case of pl 'ye'*) **behoved** (*impers v*) **have**: it behoved you all to have

929–30 ‘It would be ill done (that) so fair a group of **joly** [beautiful] gems (= ladies) should lodge out in the open’

931 **there:** where **gele:** linger

933–4 **I trow alone ye leng and loute To loke on:** I believe you all only linger and pause here to look on, i.e. I think that you all just visit the garden for recreation, not reside in it **gote:** stream

939–40 **con fonde To suffer in sore:** sought out (as the place) to suffer pain in

941 ‘The old Jerusalem, that means to say’

942 **the olde gylt:** i.e. the guilt of original sin **was done to slake:** was caused to die out, i.e. was put an end to

944 **in teme con take:** took up in his discourse

947 **flake:** flaw

948 ‘So is His **mote** [castle-city] without **mote** [spot]’ (a play on homophones)

949 ‘To speak plainly of *two* cities’

951–2 **That nis** [is not] **to yow no more to mene** [to be interpreted]

Bot: that (name) signifies to you (mortals) nothing other than ...

952 **sight:** vision

953 **that one:** i.e. the earthly city of Jerusalem (as distinct from **that other** (955), its heavenly counterpart) **at ene:** at one stroke

954 **With payne to suffer:** in order to suffer painfully there

955 **is noght bot pese to glene:** there is nothing but peace to be *reaped* (i.e. the spiritual peace sown in pain in the earthly Jerusalem is reaped in the heavenly Jerusalem)

957 **that we to:** to which we

959 **There:** where

961 **may:** maiden

963 **bygly:** splendid

965 **That²:** i.e. sight of her **bour** [chamber] within the city (which the father may see from the outside, but cannot enter: 969–70)

967 **of:** from **aquylde:** obtained (permission)

972 **Bot:** unless; *followed by subjunctive 'were'*

975 **anende**: opposite

979 **Til ... that**: until

981 'Sunk/set down on the opposite side of the water from me' (see
988 and footgloss)

982 **then**: than

983 **is the fasoun preved**: the form and appearance of it is shown

988 'As (it was when) it had **lyght** [descended] down from heaven'
(the city is said to come down from the sky at Rev. 3:12, 21:2)

990 **broun**: shining

991 **anunder pyght**: set at the base (991ff follow Rev. 21:19–20 in
describing each tier of a twelve-fold foundation as constructed of a
separate precious stone)

992 **bantels**: step-like tiers **on basyng boun**: positioned at the base

993 **of rich tenoun**: splendidly joined

994 **serlepes**: distinct, different

997–8 ‘I knew the names of these stones from the report of John, and (they were) as he named them in his text’; **name** is *distributive singular*

after: in accordance with, following

1004 **table**: band, tier **pale**: show pale

1007 ‘He discerned the ruby as the sixth’; **hit** is a *recapitulatory pronoun* and **he** an *anticipatory one*

1011 **white**: bright, shining

1012 **the nente endent**: the ninth (jewel) set (in the foundation)

1013 **the tenth is tyt**: is joined (to it) as the tenth

1015 **the gentylest in uch a plyt**: the most valuable in every kind of plight; the reference is to the supposed protective powers – or ‘virtues’ – of gems (cf. 14–16)

1016 **with ynde blent**: blended with indigo

1018 as glasse that glysnande schon: which (i.e. the wall) shone glistening like glass

1019 hit: i.e. the city as a whole

1021 yet: also, in addition

1022 stayre: steep

1024 fayre: precisely, exactly

1025 gold as glasse all bare: gold as clear as glass

1026 glayre: the translucent part of an uncooked egg, used as a glaze in painting and cooking

1029 sware: dimension

1031 lenthe to kayre: length to be traversed

1032 'For the apostle John saw it measured' (**meten** [to measure] is *infinitive, as is regular with verbs of perception*: cf. 514); the reference is to the angel whom John sees measuring the city with a golden reed in Rev. 21:15–17

1034 pane: technical term for the side of a building

1035 **poursent**: perimeter

1036 **pyked of**: ornamented with

1037 **of**: constructed out of

1039–41 ‘A name in writing was set on each one, (the names being those) of (the twelve tribes founded by) the children of Israel (= Jacob), the order following that of their dates of birth’

1042 I.e. the elder was always set thereon before the younger; 1040–42 make the same point three times (that the names are in order of seniority)

1046 **lambe** [lamp] **lyght**: bright luminary

1050 ‘Because of the refined clearness, nothing **lette** [prevented, impeded] (the passage of) any light’, i.e. there was no material of such opacity as to prevent the eye from seeing through it

1055 **of**: from **out right**: directly out

1056 **Was bryghter then**: which was brighter than; *omitted relative pronoun* (cf. 664, 732)

1061–2 ‘In that place there was never any church provided nor any chapel or temple ever set up there’

1064 **to refet**: for refection, as nourishment

1065 **was**: were; **yates** [*gates*] *here behaves as collective singular*: ‘set of gates’

1066 **lone**: lane, street

1067–8 **non ... That**: no one ... who

1069 ‘The moon may draw to itself no power (i.e. light) from that place’; the moon is too gross a body (1070) to absorb light from the present source, as she does from the sun, and there is anyway no need for a nocturnal luminary in a place in which there is no night (1071)

1070 **To**¹, **to**²: too (as at 1075 and 1076)

1072 **What schuld**: why should, i.e. what would be the point of ... ?

compas clym: ascend on its circular course

1073 **to even** (v) **with**: emulate; *a second infinitive dependent on an auxiliary verb was sometimes preceded by ‘to’*: hence here **schuld** (1072)

... clym ... to even

1075–6 I.e. not only the moon, but all the other planets (even the sun) that illumine the mortal world, would actually appear dark here

1077 **schym**: bright

1078 The 'twelve fruits' are explained in lines 1079–80: the trees bear fruit twelve times a year, renewing themselves monthly ('in every moon') **con bere ful sone**: do bear very quickly (i.e. in a month, not a year)

1079 **frym** (*adj as n*): juicy, plump (fruit)

1082, 1090 **fleschly**, **bodyly**: in body, in the flesh (the dreamer himself experiences the vision in spirit, not in body: 61–3)

1083 **As when I**: i.e. as I experienced when I ...

1085 **dased**: paralysed

1086 **fresch**: bright, vivid

1087 I.e. so that my senses were numbed and I had no physical sensation

1090 'If a man in the flesh had undergone that experience'

1092 **were**: would be

1093 **Right as**: just as when **maynful**: powerful (i.e. in its effects on earth, discernible in the literal tides and, as an agent of mutability, in the tides of life)

1094 **Ere then** [than]: before **drive** (*subj*) **all down**: disappears quite below the horizon

1097 **enprise**: esteem, grandeur

1100 **That**: as

1103 **In**: on, upon **boun**: in position

1106 **gates**: paths, streets

1108, 1112 *singular verb with plural subject* (cf. 1065)

1109 **Tor to telle**: (it would have been) hard to tell (which was) ...

1110 **proudly**: in state, magnificently

1111 The Lamb is said to have seven horns (and seven eyes) at Rev. 5:6 **red gold**: of the colour of pure or reddish gold (see n. to G 663)

1113 **trone a tras**: took their way

1114 **no pres in plyt**: (there was) no disorderly crowding in the business

1115 **seme**: seemly

- 1118 'It would be too great to speak of (i.e. impossible to express)'
1121 **togeder voched**: called together, assembled together
1123 **new abroched** [broached]: begun anew
1124 **to love**: to praise (see 285) **gay**: beautiful, splendid
1125–6 **steven** [voiced sound] ... **of joy**: cry/song of joy
1127 'In the midst of His **meyny** [followers] to praise the Lamb'
1130 **With**: together with **went** *is past tense of 'wende' [pass, go]*
1132 'That I ever heard speech spent of', i.e. that I ever heard tell of
1135 **con wyse**: did show, was visible
1136, 1139 **to-** and **for-** *are intensifying prefixes*
1137 **Of**: out of
1140 **thereto** ... **delit**: desire for that

- 1141 'The Lamb did not desire to diminish any of the (general) joy'
1143 **was never sene**: (that fact) was not at all apparent
1146 **How**: (and saw) how ...
1148 **by me**: near me
1149–50 **was that ho made ... that**: was that which she made, (she) who ...
1151–2 'That sight, because of love-longing, **gart** [caused] me, in my great joy, to resolve to **wade** [cross through water on foot]' (with play on **wade ... in ... delit** [bask in joy])
1153 'Delight was pouring into me through both eye and ear'; **me** [*for me*] is *dative*
1155 **wolde**: wanted to
1156 **walt**: removed, conveyed
1158 'By fetching me a blow and putting a hold on me'
1159 **stere**: restrain, hold back

- 1161 'But I was jolted out of that intention'
1162 **schuld**: was about to
1164 **at my princes pay**: in accord with my prince's (= God's)
pleasure (cf. line 1; **pay** bears the sense 'pleasure, satisfaction'
throughout this final section)
1168 **therein**: in that course of action
1170 **brath**: impetus
1172 **huyle**: grassy mound
1173 **Thereas**: where
1174 **raxled**: stirred, came to
1176 **all be**: let all be
1179 **quik and queme**: vivid and pleasing
1183 'How precious to me was that which you said'

- 1184 **veray avysyoun**: veritable vision (n.)
- 1187–8 **So wel is me ... That**: then it is well with me ... in that/
because of the fact that **doel-doungoun**: i.e. the mortal world (in its
character as a ‘vale of tears’)
- 1189 **had I**: if I had
- 1190 **then was me given**: than had been granted to me
- 1193 **As helde**: very probably **present**: presence
- 1196 ‘Than could by right cleave to them’, i.e. than could rightfully
belong to them
- 1197–8 **was governs both to-riven and cast**
- 1199 **hit are**: they are
- 1201 **sette saght**: propitiate

1208 'In Christ's blessing and my own' was a parental benediction

1209 **That:** (Christ) who

1211 **He gyve** (*subj*) **us:** may He give (= grant) us ...

- 1 As Turville-Petre points out (1977: 108), the stories of the Flood and of Sodom and Gomorrah are linked several times in the Bible itself (e.g. Luke 17:26–9); but the further link with the punishment of Belshazzar for his desecration of the temple vessels is neither common nor obvious.

[2](#) See Spearing 1987.

3 See *MED clene* *adv* 2 and *adj* 2(c) and 5, *clenli* *adj* (a) and (c) and *adv* 2.

⁴ See Morse 1971.

⁵ See Spearing 1970: 54.

⁶ See Burrow 2001: 24–32.

NB: Footglosses are selective (see pp. xxxii-xxxiii–); see the Glossary for words not included

1–4 ‘If anyone knew how to praise Cleanness appropriately and list all the justifications that she demands by right, he could find pleasing illustrations with which to further his discourse, and in the contrary theme great trouble and adversity’

6 **folwes Him after**: is one of His followers, serves Him (as his lord)

7 **As**: such as

9 **teen**: go **temen** [attach themselves] **to Himselven**: i.e. profess Him as their lord

10 **richen**: dress, prepare

11 **usen hit bothe**: partake of it (= the Eucharist) as well

12 **clos**: enclosed

- 14 **As be:** so as to be **honest:** righteous
16 **Him to greme cachen:** drive Him to anger
18 **honest:** seemly, decorous **hawerly:** fittingly
19 'Surrounded by angels in all that is clean'
21 'If He were not fastidious and sensitive, and loved no evil'
22 **to:** too
24 'Where He set up eight blessed states and promised to them their rewards'
25 **Me mynes** (*impers v*) **on:** I remember
29 **As so says:** as if to say **seche:** reach, attain
30 'Who is wearing any uncleanness anywhere about him'
32 'Cannot bear the blow (it would constitute) should it come near His person'

- 33 **hateres**: clothes, garments
34 **harlotes hode**: low fellow's hood
37 **set solempnely**: seated in state
38 **Above dukes on dese**: presiding over magnates at the dais (high table)
39 **Then**: If then **harlot**: low fellow
40 **cokres**: leg-coverings **clutte**: patched **trasches**: tattered garments
41 **his totes oute**: ?toes of his shoes worn out
42 **Other**: or **holden utter**: put outside
48 'Even if he commit no other offence' (n.)
50 'The High King in heaven is even harsher towards him'
51 **his Masse**: i.e. the Mass at which the reading is the Parable of the Wedding Feast from the Gospel of Matthew (n.)
52 'Who made the great banquet for the marriage of his dear heir'

- 54 **quoyntyse**: elegant apparel, finery
55 **bayted**: pastured, fattened by grazing
56 **with slaghte**: for slaughter
57 **polyle**: poultry
58 **scheldes**: slabs **crones**: cranes
59 **rotheled**: turned on a spit, roasted **right to the sete**: ready for the banquet
60 **Comes** is *plural imperative*, as are the verbs at 77–8 and 81 (see p. xviii) **cof**: quickly
61 ‘When those who were to go there were informed of his summons’
62 **by the skylle he scape by myghte**: by (giving) whatever reason he could escape by
66 **yat**: got, obtained
67 **byes**: farmsteads **have I mester**: I need
69 **wer him**: defended himself

- 71 **drow hem adrey**: drew back **daunger**: standoffishness
72 **That**: with the result that
73 **ledische lord**: lord of that people
74 **dryly**: gravely
75 **for**: to **forsaken**: refused
76 'Their wrongdoing is more to be blamed than any course chosen by a Gentile'
78–9 **forsettes ... The wayferande frekes**: block the path of the wayfaring men
81 **leng at my feste**: stay as guests for my feast
82 **as barouns they were**: as if they were magnates
85 'Then those who guarded the district went out and came back'
86 **bacheleres**: knights
88 **of fre and of bonde**: both freemen and bondmen

89 **keppte**: received

90 **Stightled with**: assigned lodgings by

92 **As he was dere of degre**: according to his status; the guests are seated in order of social rank (cf. *G* 1006)

94 **your lege heste**: the command which we are bound, as your liegemen, to obey

96 **renischche renkes**: strange men, strangers

100 **What kyn folk so**: whatever sort of people

102 **on-yed**: one-eyed

103 **balterande**: stumbling

104 **holly**: wholly **by halkes**: to every nook

106 **denounced me noght**: did not at all proclaim their allegiance to me

108 **on**: one

111 **plytes**: conditions

112 'They were not all the sons of one woman, begotten by one father', i.e. they were a motley crew

114 'The highest in status and arrayed most splendidly always sitting higher up the table' (cf. 92)

116 **on lenthe biloogh**: beneath them, down the length of the side tables

117–18 'And in every case in accordance with how men variously appeared by their clothing, so were they at their meal, at the marshal's direction, accorded more or less honour'

119 'Of splendidly dressed men in the social gathering there were few to be seen'

122 **laykes**: entertainments **in londe**: in his domain

124 **mach**: mess-mate (guests were served in pairs: cf. *G* 113, 128)

128 **chere**: gracious demeanour **chaufen**: warm, encourage

- 130 **best**: highest-ranking
131 **semblaunt**: friendly bearing **sylede ferre**: proceeded further on
134 **thryght**: set **unthryvandely**: unworthily
135 **honestly**: honourably, suitably
136 'And with no robe fit for a feast day but one soiled with workday labours'
138 **gremed therewith**: was angered by that
140 **foule**: dirty
141 **no halyday hit menskes**: does no honour to a festival
143 'How could you be so bold as to **neghe** [approach] this house to your misfortune ...'
144 **In on** [one] **so ratted a robe**: in such a ragged robe
145 **ungoderly**: vile
146–7 'You honoured me and my house in a most beggarly fashion in being so ready to approach my presence (dressed) in it'

151 'He was so confused in his wits, in his fear lest he should receive harm'

152 **on**: one

153 **laled**: called out

154–6 **Takes, Byndes and festnes** [*fasten*] are plural imperatives

159 **gretynge**: weeping **gryspytynge**: gnashing

160 **tenfully**: painfully **quoynte**: smartly dressed

163 **lathed**: invited

164 **fulwed**: baptized

165 **wilt**: want to (be at the feast)

166 **honest**: respectable, seemly

167 **aproch thou**: if you approach **parage**: birth, rank

168 **then**: than **souly**: dirty

169 **thou wrappes thee inne**: in which you wrap yourself
170 **schewe hem**: appear
171 **Hit are**: they are
172–3 **lyned**: lined (n.) **the lykyng ... That**: the desire that
174 **fetyse of a fayr forme**: neatly fashioned
178 **then**: thus **one**: alone, simply
179 **As for**: as likewise for
180 **in**: into
181 **colwarde**: unscrupulousness, wickedness
182 **monsworne**: perjury **to**: too
183 **threpyng**: contentiousness **unthonk**: (God's) disfavour
184 **riboudrye**: debauchery
185–6 The reference is to the abuse or flouting of law in order to deprive widows of their *dowers* [property rightfully theirs] or to procure annulments of marriages or to support or succour client wrongdoers
188 **false famacions**: defamation **faynede lawes**: spurious legal claims

- 189 **is to prayse**: is to be praised
193 **of**: from
194 **resouns of right**: true expositions
195 **proper**: fine
196 **plyes to scathe**: deviates towards evil
197 **breved**: recorded
198 **wrak**: wreaked vengeance
200 **hatel of His wille**: because of the angry hostility of His emotions
201 **unsoundely**: violently
203 **fre thewes**: noble qualities
204 **wex wod to the wrake**: grew **wod** [mad, rabid] for vengeance
205 **the false fende**: i.e. Lucifer
207 **attled**: ordained
208 **carle**: peasant **kyd**: showed, was seen to give

210 **forsoke**: repudiated

211 **tramountayne**: north (< Latin *transmontanus* [beyond the Alps])

212 **lyft**: sky, heavens

213 **lyghte**: fell

214 **dere dome**: fate-deciding judgement

215 'Without intemperance of heart, His self-restraint undiminished',
i.e. God is not transported by rage out of His divine imperturbability,
as He is by 'filth of the flesh' (see 202-4): cf. 230, 247

216 **tynt**: wiped out **tythe-dole**: tenth part

217 **fyrce for**: bold because of

220 **thro**: violently **threwen**: plunged

222 **Sweved**: swept **swap**: blow

224 **Fylter fendene** (*gen pl*) **folk**: the company of devils form a
confused mass

226 **smylt**: ?sifted **smal**: fine

229 **This hit was:** this was **breme brest:** fierce act of injury **big:** powerful

230 **ne the wrech saghtled:** nor did the wretch (= Lucifer) make his peace with Him

231 **wylnesful:** wilfulness **knowe:** acknowledge (as lord)

233 'Therefore, though the blow was fierce, the piteousness was little', i.e. Lucifer's punishment should arouse little grief

234 **kepes no better:** is not interested in anything better

235 'But the **other** [second] act of vengeance that arose, that alighted on **wyes** [men, i.e. human beings]'; **hit** is a *recapitulatory pronoun*

238 **There:** where

240 **forgarte:** forfeited

242 **parted:** descended

243 **For a defence:** because of a prohibition **of:** by

244 'And a **payne** [penalty] attached thereto and clearly enforced'

245 **defence:** prohibition

- 247 **mesure**: temperateness **methe**: restraint (cf. 215, 230)
- 248 **eft**: afterwards **with**: by **make**: peer, equal (the reference is to the Virgin Mary)
- 249 'But in the third (act of vengeance) was crushed everything designed to carry on life'
- 250 **maugre much**: great ill-will
- 253 **Hit were**: they were
- 254 **most**: biggest **meriest**: best-looking
- 255 **stifest**: strongest
- 256 **lent**: set, placed **of ledes all other**: of all (generations of) men; *for the construction, cf. G 944*
- 257 **forme foster**: first offspring **bredde**: bred, begot
- 258 **athel auncesteres sunes that**: noble sons of the ancestor who
- 260 **bout** [without] **blame**: blameless
- 261 'And most like to that man (were those) who lived the nearest (= soonest) after him'
- 263 **loke to kynde**: to attend to nature
- 264 **all hit course clanly fulfyll**: follow to the end the path it lays down (**clanly** = (a) without imperfection, (b) completely)

268 **als**: also **other**: i.e. other women

269 **So ferly fouled her flesh**: their flesh had become so remarkably corrupt

270 **deghter of the douth**: daughters of that (human) tribe

271 **felawschyp**: sexual partnership **on folkene** (*gen pl*) **wyse**: in the manner of humans

272 **japes ille**: evil lewdness

274 **alosed**: praised

276 **biggest**: strongest, sturdiest

279 **For that**: for

280 **begines**: starts to react

284 'In the manner of a man inwardly anguished, (He) said to Himself'

285 **Me forthynkes** (*imp v*): I regret

286 **delyver and do away that**: get rid of and remove those who

289 **All schal doun**: everything shall go down (i.e. be destroyed)

292 'I shall take care to be vigilant to keep their tricks (= misdemeanours) under control'

296 'And always walking with God (corresponding to 'Noah walked [*ambulavit*] with God': Genesis 6:9): so much the greater was his grace'

297 **Him** [*dat*: to him] **was the name**: his name was

299 **other**: second

301 **nye**: distress, anger **con speke**: spoke

304 'Has fallen before my face (i.e. has come into my mind), and I intend to carry it out'

305 **me wlates** (*imp v*): it sickens me, I feel sick

307 **I schal strenkle** [scatter abroad] **my distresse**: i.e. I will visit my anguish (punitively) on widely disparate areas

310 **cofer** [chest, ark] renders Latin *arca*, the primary meaning of which was 'chest': cf. **kyst** (346), **chyst** (464), **whichche** (362) **closed of tres**: enclosed by means of wooden boards

312 **cleme**: daub, plaster

313 'And daub on the outside all the nailed joints'

314 **thou make** (*imp*): make

319 'Measuring properly one cubit (about 18in/45cm) square'

320 **ditande**: closing **done**: put

321 **halkes**: small recesses

322 **bolkes**: stalls, shelters **penes**: pens

324 **quelle**: kill **quik**: living **quavande**: pulsing

326 **that:** all that
328 **resoun:** righteousness **rengned:** lived
331 **makes:** spouses **mery:** fine **meyny of aghte:** household of eight
332 **of manes soules:** from among human souls **swelte:** kill
334 **makes:** companions
335 **horwed:** (ritually) unclean
337 'And always join to the males the appropriate she-beasts'
339 **frette thy cofer:** load your ark (see 310 and footgloss)
342 **drye:** heavy **daunger:** subordination **that:** he who
344 **con ... him dele:** delivered to him **dryly:** gravely

348 **as thou me wyt lantes:** as far as you have given me wit (to do it)
350 **withouten threpe:** without ado
352 **stifly:** securely **stekes yow:** shut yourselves up
354–5 ‘Such a roaring storm as will cause it to rain heavily, which ...’
359 ‘Now Noah never desists from the troublesome task he takes up’
360 **steven:** command (cf. 352)
362 **whichche:** hutch, coffer, chest (= ark; see footgloss to 310)
363 **con ryfe:** did split, were breached
364 **Waltes:** bursts
366 **lavande logh:** streaming body of water
368 **uch a rayn-ryfte:** all the rain-channels, i.e. all the reservoirs in which the rain is imagined as being stored and held back in the heavens

369 **Fon**: stopped
372 **drye**: suffer
373 **for to make**: to be made **meschef**: disaster
374 **That noght dowed** [availed] **bot**: that there was nothing for it
but
375 'Ever mightier grew the water, which destroyed dwellings'
376 **that**: those who
378 **barn**: child
379 **bonk** [slopes] *is an uninflected plural* (cf. *Pa* 343–4 and n.) **there**:
where
381 **note**: effort
382 **raynande ryg**: raining storm **raykande**: moving, advancing
383 **bothom**: 'bottom', valley
384 'And each dale most deep, which grew dark (with water: cf. 472)
to its brink'
385 **moste**: biggest
387 **flette**: were afloat

389 **styghe**: climbed
390 **Ruly**: piteously
391 **runnen**: ran
392 **bausenes**: badgers
394 **Recoverer**: relief, succour
395 **That amounted the mase**: that (simply) increased the confusion
397 **By that**: when
399 **fathmed togeder**: embraced one another
400 **drye**: suffer, undergo
401 **Luf ... luf**: loved one ... loved one
402 **at ones**: (a) instantly, (b) all together **twynne**: part
403 **By**: by the time that
404 **That the flod nade all freten**: which the flood had not devoured
407 **mourkne**: rot
408 **All that spyrakle in sprang**: all in whom the breath of life lived
sprawlyng: dying convulsions, death-throes

- 409 **Save:** except **here:** troop
- 411 **Him aghtsum:** as one of a company of eight
- 412 **There:** where
- 413 **with:** by **gotes:** currents
- 414 **the cloudes ful nere:** (lifted) close to the clouds
- 415 **waltered:** rolled
- 417 **myke:** crutch for supporting the mast **bawelyne:** bowline (rope attaching the sail to the bow of the ship)
- 418 **capstan:** drum-shaped device for winding up the anchor **clyppe:** fasten
- 419 **Hurrok:** bilge **hand-helme hasped on rother:** steering lever attached to the rudder (cf. *Pa* 149 and footgloss)
- 420 **sweande sayl:** sail sweeping (the ship) forwards
- 421 **flyt:** contention, strife (cf. 950)
- 422 **waft:** tossed, cast **rebounde:** sprang forwards
- 423 **rered on ende:** rose up vertically
- 424 'If our Lord had not been the pilot, it would have gone hard with them' (**Nif** = *ne if*; **hem had lumpen:** it would have befallen them)

- 425 'As to how old Noah was, to give the exact point in his life'
426 I.e. in his six-hundredth year precisely (**odde**: extra)
429 'And the resultant flood (continued) for three times fifty days following'
430 **ythes**: waves
433–4 'So that comfortless was it for the **remnaunt** [remaining survivors] whom the storm drives about, (the vessel) that all species so joined were assembled in'
436 **man**: servant **His methe that abides**: who waits for His merciful calmness
439 **stanges**: pools
440 **Bede blynne of the rayn**: ordered the rain to cease
441 **loukande** [locking] **togeder**: closing up, shrinking
443 **luged**: lugged itself, moved heavily
444 **weder**: storm

445 **saghtled**: settled **a soft day**: a day of mild weather
446 **rasse**: clear space, plateau **rest** (*pa*): rested
448 **hatte**: is named
450 **bothemes**: valley bottoms
451 **unhuled**: uncovered
452 **bynne borde**: within ship
454 **message**: messenger
455 **rebel**: disobedient to one's master
456 **untrue**: treacherous, disloyal to his master
460 **there**: where **costes**: areas of ground
461 **smach**: odour **smoltes**: slips, passes swiftly
463 **yisterday steven**: yesterday's orders
464 **that the chyst yemed**: who governed the ark

466 **fodes**: creatures **elles**: so long as

467 **bod to his come**: waited for his arrival

468 'Cursed him most bitinglly, along with all beasts (that follow only animal instincts?)'

471 **us wones to seche**: to find what may serve as dwelling places for us

474 'Though that bird (= the raven) be faithless, be you ever honourable'

475 **scharpe**: swift

476 'Continuously all **along** [throughout] the day, not venturing to alight'

478 **umbe-kestes the cost**: circles the area

479 **hittes**: arrives

480 **naytly her stowes**: provides her with apt quarters

483 **skyrmes under skue**: whirls out(?) through the sky

486 **stamyn**: prow
489 **sende** (*pa*): sent
490 **saghtelyng**: reconciliation, peace **sely**: innocent
491 **jumpred**: confusion **dryed**: persisted, reigned
495 **loghen**: laughed, rejoiced
497 **loved** (*from 'love' [praise], not 'lovy' [love]*): praised
504 'Eagerly jostling forward in a crowd, densely packed together'
505 **honest**: decent, i.e. belonging to the category of animals classed
as 'clean' in the Old Testament **an odde**: one not paired; there were
seven of all 'clean' beasts aboard (see 334)

507 **sere**: separate, distinct

508 **kepes**: cares for

511 **That all spedes and spylls**: who prospers and destroys all things **with that ilke**: at that juncture, thereupon

512 **clos**: confidential, intimate

513 **wary**: curse

516 **unthryfte**: vice

517 **barnage**: youth

518 **malyce**: wickedness

519–20 ‘Therefore I shall never inflict punishment with such precipitate immediacy as to destroy everything because of man’s deeds, for as long as this earth lasts’

521–2 **waxes** [*increase*], **wendes, worthes to mony** [*become numerous*], **Multyplies** *are plural imperatives* **menske yow bityde**: may honour befall you

523 ‘Seasons shall never cease for you: seedtime nor harvest ... ’

525 **sadde**: hard, stern

529 **skaylyng and skylnade**: dispersal and separation

530 **that fytheres myght serve**: to whom wing-feathers could be of service

531 **nayte**: use

532 **bites on erbes**: grazes on grasses

533 **wormes**: snakes

534 **folmarde**: polecat

536 **lake-ryftes**: pits formed by **ryftes** [clefts, hollows]

537 **Hernes**: eagles

538 **hole-foted**: web-footed

539 **there**: where

540 **of the folde fonges the empire**: receive the emperorship of the world

543–4 ‘Those beings whom He had especially favoured He punished most severely in the course of removing the ignoble grossness that conquered His own noble qualities’; God’s serenity and magnanimity fail Him in the face of ‘filth of the flesh’ (see 201–4)

545 **worschip**: glory, honour

548 **Til**: to such a degree that

549–52 ‘For there is no man under the sun so seemly in his dealings, if he be defiled in a sin that sits uncleanly upon him – one speck of a spot may cause him to fail to attain to the sight of the Sovereign who sits so high’

553–4 **that schewe me schal ... behoves be**: in order that one should appear (= arrive) ... it is necessary to be

555 **sounde**: sound, ‘healthy’ **seme**: scar, defect

557–9 SITHEN the Soverayn ... so sore forthoghte ... felly He venged: Once the Sovereign ... had so sorely regretted ... most grimly then did He inflict punishment

561 Him rued: it grieved him, he regretted

562 hard hit Him thoghte: it seemed grievous to Him

563 swemande: paining, afflicting

565 I.e. with the calm moderation that characterizes His dealings with mankind (see **215**, **247**), however sinful, in all cases except those involving ‘filth of the flesh’ (see **201–4**)

567–8 ‘In such a way as to kill all living creatures because of any evil that might be done, while the **terme** [span] of the duration of the earth lasts’

569 skylle: plan, determination

570 Whether: Nevertheless

571 that ilk faut: that same vice, i.e. ‘filth of the flesh’, sexual perversion

572 that arwede mony: which gave terror to many

576 **That he ... ne see** (*subj*): with the result that he does not see
579 'So much as indecent obscenity, degradation of one's own self'
580 'Whoever is not ashamed to descend to any kind of depravity,
may he be **schent** [destroyed, brought to nought]'
581 **savour**: understand
582 **babel**: as a babbling fool
583 **stare**: power of sight **stepe**: bright
584 **brod**: plain for all to see, egregious
588 **that dittes** [closes, shuts] **His iyen**: i.e. that His eyes are closed
to it
590 **hit**: i.e. the deed **have** (*subj*): has
592 'Searching the reins (= loins) and heart of each man'; a literal
translation of a biblical expression most familiar from Psalm 7:9/
Vulgate 7:10: *scrutans corda et renes*

593 **there:** where

595 'Sends him a solemn sight, the seeing of His own face' (with reference both to the coming experience of Abraham and to the Beatitude that promises the sight of God to the clean in heart: see 27–8)

596 **honySES:** brings down

597 'But with respect to the judgement passed on mankind for shameful deeds (= "filth of the flesh") ... '

598 **scarres:** scatters, drives off

599 **He may not drye to draw allyt:** He cannot endure to hold back

605 **was schunt to:** had retreated to

608 'Is easy to believe from the final outcome (i.e. by what ensued, which revealed their divine nature)'

612 **in onhede** [unity]: in the singular (i.e. as if they were one person: Abraham uses the singular **Lorde** and singular *thou* and *thy*)

- 615 **thy pore** (*adj for n*): your poor servant
618 'And I shall bestir myself quickly so that your feet may be washed'
619 **on this rote** [root]: at the foot of this tree **reche after**: seek out
(provisions)
620 **banne your herte**: fortify your spirits
621 **thou segges**: thou sayst
623 **orpedly**: sturdily
625 **ma**: *northern contracted form of 'make'*
627 **sumwhat fat**: something fattened (for slaughter)
630 **bede tyrve of the hyde**: ordered the hide to be stripped off
632 **dight hit**: prepared it (the calf)

- 635 **therve**: unleavened
639 **sewer**: attendant at table
640 **sad**: serious, composed **swete**: friendly, well-disposed
642 **fayn of**: pleased with
643 **with armes up folden**: with his arms held up (Abraham is holding up dishes to his guests from a kneeling position)
644 **mete**: food **that myghtes all weldes**: who wield all powers (cf. 17)
646 **of mensk speken**: make courteous conversation
647 **I schal eft here away**: I shall make my way here again; *verb of motion omitted after modal*
648 'Once more before the light of your life dies away on earth'
653 **busmare**: scorn

655 'You can believe it to be doubtful that you could produce offspring!' (n.)

657 **hit were of sad elde:** they were of great age

659 **bileved:** remained

663 **Hopes ho:** Does she think ... ?

665 **I schal yePLY ayain:** I shall promptly (come) back again

667 **swer** (*pa*): swore

668 **for lote that thay laused:** because of any words they had uttered

670 **alow:** quietly

671 **as thay rayke schulde:** as if they were about to move on

672 **all at ones:** all (three) of them together

- 675 'Where (i.e. in Mamre) dwelt this same man (= Abraham), who (now) accompanies our Lord ... '
- 676 **gate**: way
- 678 **conveye**: escort
- 680 **this fylthe**: i.e. 'filth of the flesh', sexual perversion
- 683 ' ... so as not reveal **to his corse** [to his person, to him] my most intimate **counsel** [confidential affairs]'
- 684 **childeryn** (*gen pl*): of children
- 685 'That people shall descend from so as to inundate (i.e. overspread) the world'
- 686 **blod**: nation, race
- 687 **Me bos** (*contracted form of 'behoves'*): I must
- 688 **attlyng**: intentions
- 689 **gret soun**: scandalous reports
- 690 **gares me to wrathe** (v): causes me to become wrathful
- 692 **dyn**: noise, rumour
- 693 **lyst**: art, trick **likes me ille**: ill pleases me
- 694 **That**: in that
- 695 **mas** (*contracted form of 'makes'*) **his mach** [mate]: chooses for his consort
- 696 'And they **fylter** [tangle, i.e. copulate] wrongfully together, as with a woman'
- 697 **compast hem**: devised for them **kynde**: natural
- 698 **amed**: rated, valued **oddely**: exceptionally
- 699 **drury**: romantic love **dole**: gift
- 700 **paramores**: romantic or sexual love
- 701 'And created for it a procedure more pleasing than all others'
- 702 **true** (*adj for n*): faithful lovers
- 704 **pure Paradise**: Paradise itself
- 705 **Elles**: provided that
- 706 **steven**: appointment, rendezvous **unstered with sighte**: untroubled by other eyes
- 707 **Luf-lowe**: flame of love **lasched**: flashed, blazed
- 708 **sleke**: quench

709 **skyfted**: altered **skylle**: will, purpose

711 **smod**: dirtiness **thenke**: intend

712 **That**: so that **by hem**: through them, i.e. through their example
ware: on their guard

714 **For hope of**: at the thought of **hate**: hostility

716 **on payne**: one (= the same) punishment

717 **Whether ever hit like my Lorde**: could it really please my Lord;
Whether is used in ME to introduce a question; **like** is subjunctive of the impersonal verb 'like' [to please]

718 **on**: one

719 'And weigh in the worse side of the balance those who never angered you?'; the image is that of the scales of justice (cf. 1734, based on Daniel 5:27) – 'the worse side' is the side that contains the wicked

721 **Now**: if now (*subjunctive were indicates a hypothesis*)

723 **lakked**: scorned

724 **resounable**: just, righteous **redy**: eager

725 **in**: through, because of

726 'And be included in their sentence, to have their doom?'

727 **note:** practice **unnevened hit worthe:** let such a thing not even be spoken of

730 **And:** if

731 **one:** alone

732 **smolt:** slip away

735 **for:** because **tas to non ille:** do not be offended (cf. G 1811)

736 **that mul am and askes:** (I) who am but dust and ashes (i.e. a mere mortal)

739 **And:** if

740 **on:** one

741 **fre:** noble, worthy

743 **fryst** [give respite] **I a while:** I will grant a period of respite

744 **thagh me vyl thinke** (*subj*): though it should seem most distasteful to me, i.e. however repugnant that may be to me

746 **symples:** mild

747 **usles:** ashes

749 **He hit gayn thenkes:** He finds it acceptable (that I should speak)

750 **thy fraunchis may serve:** your magnanimity may serve (to make up for my defects)

751 **be thrad:** would be struck down

752 'What shall I believe of my Lord: would He spare them?'

754 **steke:** lock up, suppress

755 **spare ... of:** desist from **in space of my thewes:** in accordance with my (godlike) attributes (cf. 203)

757 **untwynes:** unravel, destroy

758 **yif:** if

760 'But remit for the whole region the penalty of their incontinent deeds'

763 'If ten faithful in thy works (i.e. in godly living) are **tan** [taken, found] there'

764 **mese thy mod**: temper your wrath

768 **conveyen** [escort, attend] **Him con with cast of his iye**: followed Him with his eyes (cf. 678; Abraham 'attends' God now, no longer on foot, but with his eyes)

771 'Merciful master, if it pleased you to remember your **man** [servant]'

772 **brother**: kinsman (Lot was Abraham's nephew)

776 **As**: to such a degree that **malt**: flow (from the melting of your heart) **thy meke**: your meek ones

778 **mere**: border

779 **longing**: anxiety

780 **sende**: sent (men)

781 **sonde**: message

783 **mery**: fine, handsome

784 **loge dor**: house door

785 **that place**: that mansion **pyght to the yates**: adjoining the (city-)gates

786 **That**: i.e. the **place** [mansion: 785] **so**: as

787 **stoute**: princely **played**: recreated themselves, were at leisure

788 **in asent**: in step

790 **to rawe silk like**: i.e. blond and wavy (raw silk is a creamy colour and has more texture than spun silk)

791 **brere-flour**: wild rose **the bare**: the naked flesh

792 **countenance**: appearance

794 **fetures**: parts of face and/or body

795 **non aucly**: nothing amiss

796 **the yep** (*adj for n*): the astute man **underyede**: understood

- 801 **knaves kote**: servant's hut
802 **fatte**: vat, tub
805 **nay that thay nolde**: said they would not **neghe**: approach
806 **stilly**: simply **as thay stad were**: where they were placed
807 **logge thereoute**: take their lodgings in the open
808 **Hit** (*anticipatory pron*): i.e. **the heven upon lofte**
813 **welcom as the wyf couthe**: as hospitably received as the wife was able (to make them)
817 **lokes him aboute**: attends to matters
818 **mete**: food
819 'But take care that it be properly done, whatever you cook'
821 **wroth to dispite**: turned it (= the guests' aversion to seasoned food) into matter for offence (i.e. took offence)
822 **unsavere** puns on two senses, 'without sapience/silly' and 'without the savour given by salt' **hyne** [labourers, hirelings] is here a term of disparagement
823 **hit no skylle** [logic, reason] **were** (*subj*): it would make no sense
824 **be boute**: go without (salt) **nice**: foolish
827 **skelt hem in scorne that**: treated with scorn those who **skylle**: plan, scheme
830 **of glam debonere**: in speech graciously pleasant
831 **Welawynnely wlonk**: beautifully splendid **waschen**: washed their hands
832 'And the trestles and the board had both been removed to the wall'
833 **Fro**: after
834 **uppe**: astir
836 **the ledes to take**: to seize the men (i.e. the angels)

838 'As when the watch has been alarmed, a loud cry rose'; the **ascry** would be raised to alert men to the presence of a foe, or to summon them to the pursuit and capture of one attempting to escape, e.g. from a city under siege (cf. **umbe-lye** at 836), as at 1205–6

839 **of that clos ... the woves**: the walls of the house

844 **assyse**: rule, practice

845 **sputen**: dispute, make claims

846 **yestande**: frothing (like fermenting yeast)

847 **weder**: air

848 'From the vomit which those fiercely shouted words cast up'

849 **glyfte**: froze with horror **gloped**: was stunned in his wits

852 **He doted never ... so depe**: he had never been so deeply confounded

855–6 **he wonded for no wothe ... That he ne passed the port**: he was not deterred by any danger ... from stepping outside the gateway

857 **wyket**: small door set in the main gates **waft hit him after**:
closed it behind him

858 **clyket**: locking latch

859 **mesurable**: temperate

861 **fre**: high-born, worthy **to strange**: too extreme

863 'For shame! You are showing **vilany** [baseness, the want of
courtliness characterizing the base-born *villain*], you debase
yourselves'

864 **And**: if **gentylmen**: well-born men of *gentil* status

865 **kynde**: nature **craft**: practice

867 **maydenes unmard for**: virgins intact with regard to

870 **tho semely**: those comely ones

871 **tayt**: well formed, well grown **quoynte**: pretty

874 **awly**: awfully, horribly

876 **kylle of**: (will) strike off

877 **justise**: judge, arbiter

878 **boy**: commoner, i.e. 'nobody'

879 **threwen umbe his eres**: moved agitatedly close around him

880 **distressed him**: pressed in on him

885–6 'They blew a blow in among them that put a curse on the people, so that they blundered about as blind as ever the horse Bayard was' (n.)

887 **lest**: failed **lysoun**: ?trace

888 **nyteled**: ?groped about

889 **uch tulk ... that**: each man who **tyght him**: betook himself **tayt**: pleasure, sport

890 **rotheled to the rest that**: stumbled his way to whatever sleeping place

891 **thay ... that**: those ... who **all wrong**: all amiss, rudely

892 **Of on [one] the uglokest**: by quite the most horrendous; *on on* + -est see footgloss to *G* 137

893 **RUDDON**: redness

896 'And in a state of alarm they bade him in God's name to get up'
898 **cof to carch that**: quickly to get hold of what
901–5 **Kayre** (*imp s*): go; **Foundes** [*go*], **lokes**, **bes** [*be*], **streiches** and **restes** are imperative plural and so include Lot's household in the adjurations to him; singular **thou** at 901–2 is similarly replaced by forms of the plural pronoun **ye** in 903–6 **here** (902): household, retinue
905 **stemme no step**: pause not for one step
907–8 **toun** is the object of all three verbs, **tyne** [*wipe out*], **disstrye** and **devoyde** [*obliterate*]
909 **losen**: will destroy
914 'If it befell me that I might flee upon foot'

915 **kynded**: kindled

916 'Which burns all things in the force of His breath'

917 **To crepe** is parallel with **hyde** (915) and dependent on **How schuld I** [how should I be able to] (915) **wheder**: whither, in what direction

920 'But He has raised your welfare high up away from those who are (doomed to be) destroyed'

921 **warisch**: protect

922 **He ... that**: He who

925 **loved**: praised (see footgloss to 497)

926 **that ... hit**: which

927 **hit one**: on its own

930 'With whomever you wish from among those who are your dependants'

932 **rise** (*subj after ere*): rises

934 **mery:** goodly
935 **thay:** i.e the two prospective sons-in-law **tayt:** sport, fun
941 **had:** led
943 **taken in:** caught up in **tech:** blemish, vice **tyrauntes:** ruffians
944 **bowe now by bote:** obey now for your own safety
945 **kayren hem con:** started to betake themselves **flowen:** fled
950 'Coming from the four sides of the earth in loud contention'
951 **bitwene:** in their midst
952 **That ... hem:** which
953 **rueled:** pelted **ridlande:** streaming
954 **flaunkes:** sparks **soufre:** sulphur, brimstone

955 **smolderande**: stifling, suffocating

956 **hit sides**: its regions

957 **that**: so that

959 **birolled with**: bepelting by; *the construction is absolute*: **birolled**,
rosted and brenned are all past participles

962 **unfolded**: opened up

964 **That**: so that

966 'As pages of a book that springs apart fall loose'

967 'By the time the brimstone gale had ceased'

968 **sides**: districts **sunkken**: had sunk

972 **that Cryst myght have routh**: such that Christ might have pity
(to hear it)

- 973 **The segge ... that:** the man who
975 'They were physically much afraid, (those) who fled without
pause'
977 **lefly:** dear
978 'Always looked straight ahead' (cf. 903)
979 **baleful:** disposed to evil **bode:** command
981 **lusty Lothes wyf:** Lot's warm-blooded wife
982–3 **bode ho no lenger That ho nas stad:** she remained there no
longer without taking the form of ...
984 **Also ... as:** as ... as
985 **Thay ... that:** They who
986 **sayned:** blessed
987 **lyght loves:** happy hands **loved:** praised (see footgloss to 497)
990 **that little toun:** i.e. Segor
991 **malscrande:** bewildering, confounding

994 **make**: mate, wife

996 **that**: in which **fol**: sinner, wrongdoer

998 **thagh her forboden were**: though it was forbidden to her (to do so)

999 **For one**: i.e. for one of the faults

1000 'And all the beasts of the field like to lick at her'

1003 **in a wache**: in sleeplessness

1004 'He has gone up to where he had left our Lord'

1006 **of erthe the swettest**: the most delightful in the world

1007 **As aparaunt to**: being comparable with

1008 **like of ... fylled**: filled as though with

1009 'A great **rothun** [?redness] of smoke rose from the blackness (i.e. the pitch-like liquid)'

1010 **usles**: cinders

- 1011 **fornes**: cauldron **flot**: liquid matter
1012 **bette**: kindled
1013 **voyded**: obliterated
1015 **There**: There where
1016 **drovy**: murky, muddied **ded in hit** [its] **kynde**: innately 'dead'
(cf. 1020)
1018 **stanc**: pool
1021 **hit** [its] **dedes of deth**: the death-bringing acts associated with
it
1024 **costes of kynde**: properties of nature
1027 **there**: where
1028 **gresse ne wode**: plant nor tree
1029 **schent**: executed

1031 **in losyng evermore**: for ever lost (from the world)
1032 **to dayes of ende**: until the days of the end of the world
1033 **of**: by **hit costes**: its shores
1034 **corsyes**: corrosives
1035 **alkaran**: mineral pitch **angre**: caustic
1036 **saundyver**: natron
1037 **wax-lokes**: wax-like lumps
1038 **aspaltoun**: asphalt (which was used for medicinal purposes)
spyseres: apothecaries
1039 **such**: of this nature **by that see halves**: in the areas around that sea
1040 **fretes**: eats into, corrodes **festeres**: rots
1041 **terne**: tarn, pool of water **of traytoures kynde**: with the nature that traitors have
1042 **borgounes**: burgeon
1044 **apple-garnade**: pomegranate
1045–6 **Also ... so ... As**: as ... as ... as
1046 ‘As any mind could imagine with respect to any choice foods at all’

1047 **brused**: fragmented

1048 **bot**: except **wyndowande askes**: ashes scattering in the wind

1050 **wittnesse**: evidence

1051 **That our Fader forferde**: ‘in which our Father carried out destruction’

1052 **the wlonk** (*adj for n*): what is goodly

1053 **He ... that**: He who **riche**: great, splendid

1056 **con**: know **bot**: other than **worthe** (*subj*): should become

1057 **Clopyngnel** refers to Jean de Meun, the continuator of the famous love-allegory (begun by Guillaume de Lorris), *Le Roman de la rose* (c.1275), who names himself at 10565 as ‘Jehan Clopinel’ **clene**: elegantly executed

1058–9 **There**: where **spede ... Of a lady to be loved**: succeed in being loved by a lady

1062 **that thou fre holdes**: whom you hold to be noble

1064 ‘That **layk** [behaviour] which **lyknes her tille** [is like to her] will inevitably (**schal** = must) **like** [please] her’

1065 **dele drury**: 'deal romance', have love-dealings

1068 **That**: who, i.e. Christ

1069–74 **For loke** [see] introduces two parallel subordinate clauses in 1069–70 and 1073–4: **fro first that** [from the first, when] at 1069 correlates with **And eft** [and afterwards] at 1073, and **By how comly** (1070) with **In wich** [what] **puryte** (1074); the two sections introduce, respectively, the subjects of the immaculate conception (1069–72) and the virgin birth (1073–7), which was held to have been without pain or mess

1070 **By how comly a cast** [device, stratagem]: i.e. the provision of a virgin womb

1074 **departed**: parted, became two separate bodies

1076 **schroude**: draped, decorated **schepon**: shed for cattle or sheep

1077 **under God**: under the heavens, in the world **schulde**: would normally (cf. *Pa* 462)

1078–9 **seknesse** and **rot** refer to the moral disease and spiritual death (consequent on the Fall) for which Christ provided a remedy

1081 **organes** could refer to portable string or wind instruments, as here, as well as to pipe organs

- 1083 **all hende**: all graceful things, all gracefulness **honestly**: honourably, decently
- 1084 **when ho deliver were** (*subj*): when she was due to be delivered
- 1085 **barn**: child
- 1086 **Him hered at ones**: worshipped Him at once
- 1088 **of such a clos**: from such an enclosure
- 1089 **com** (*pa, as also at 1088*): came (into the world)
- 1090 **That**: in that **longed to**: belonged to, pertained to
- 1091 **nolde** (= *ne wolde*): would not
- 1092 **or ordure was inne**: or in which there was filth
- 1093 **lodly**: loathsome ones, i.e. the medically 'unclean'
- 1094 **lomerande**: ?stumbling; the verb is probably related to **lome** [lame]
- 1095 **fires**: fevers
- 1098 **of that thay ask after**: of whatever (infirmity) they make their request about
- 1099 **also tite**: as quickly (as possible), at once
- 1100 **clener then**: cleaner than; *clene* here combines the sense 'free of disease' (suggested by **hele**: 1099) with the aesthetic sense 'more perfectly' (suggested by **craft** [skill, art])

1101 **uch ordure hit schonied**: (that) all uncleanness shunned it

1102–3 ‘And the “groping” of (Him who was) both God and man (was) so excellent that on account of ... ’; **gropyng** and **hondelyng** (1101) could refer to specifically manual examination or to any manoeuvre with the hands; the two senses are appropriate to the transition in 1101–2 from Christ’s medically cleansing touch to His more general dexterity, which always accomplished ‘a clean job’

1106 **freloker in fete**: more nobly in action

1107 **Displayed**: ‘splayed’, unfolded itself **hit part schulde**: came to part it

1108 **Then**: than **tyght**: manage

1109 ‘To such a degree is He **curious** [meticulous, skilful] and spotless, whose court you ask (to enter)’

1110 **bot if**: unless

1111 **sore**: wretched, evil **souly**: dirty

1112 **may we say**: we might ask

1113 **Yis** [yes, indeed], more emphatic than the normal affirmative *yea*, was often used in response to a question implying a negative answer (cf. *Pa* 346–7)

1114 **to-** (*intensifying prefix*) **marred**: disfigured

- 1115–16 **schryfte** [shrift, confession] was the sacrament by which actual (as opposed to original) sin was remitted – by absolution and performance of the assigned **penaunce** [satisfaction, penalty]; the sacrament mediated the mercy (cf. 1113) or grace available through Christ (cf. *Pe* 653–65) **schame served**: deserved shame
- 1117 **prayed is pris there**: is commended as the best where **schewed**: exhibited (for display or purchase)
- 1119 ‘What can be called the cause of this other than (that it is) because of her pure hue’
- 1120 **That wynnes worschip**: which wins (for the pearl) esteem
- 1122 **other**: or **if ho fyne were**: if she was a pure pearl; the feminine gender of the noun **perle** is retained in the pronoun (cf. 1124), to semi-personifying effect (cf. *Pe* 1–10)
- 1123 ‘And however old in the world it may **wax** [grow] in use’
- 1124 **while ho in pece lastes**: for the length of time that she lasts
- 1126 **That**: so that **there**: where
- 1127 **No bot wasch**: (you have) only (to) wash/just wash
- 1128 **then ere**: than before

1129–30 *The switch from plural (folk) to singular (he) in such indefinite references is not uncommon* **That:** with the result that **seche** (*subj*) **to:** let him seek out, let him make his way to

1131 **by penaunce taken:** through the penance (assigned by the confessor) he has received (1131–2 repeat the point made at 1115–16)

1132 **then:** than

1137–8 **tene** [anger; be angry] and **hate** could be nouns or verbs here

1140 **holly:** wholly

1141 **Then eft lastes hit likkes:** when, after that, vices lick it

1142 **As hit were:** as if it had been **with thewes:** by thieves

1144 **For that that ones:** by the fact that what once

1146 **that Dryhtyn ones served:** which has at any time been in the service of the Lord

1147 **fast**: firmly, strictly

1148 **So**: to such a degree **skylful**: righteous

1149–50 **And that was bared ... How hard unhap**: And that was revealed ... in how severe a misfortune **Baltazar tyme**: Belshazzar's time; *personal nouns, especially long or foreign ones, could be uninflected in the genitive* (cf. 1436, 1314)

1151 **For**: because

1152 **sumtyme before**: at one time in the past

1153 **tyght me a tom**: set by a space of time for me **hit** is an anticipatory pronoun, expanded in the **How** clause that follows

1154–5 **charged more was his chaunce that ... Then**: heavier was the lot of him who ... than was that of **his fader**: i.e. Nebuchadnezzar (by whom the Jewish temple was originally despoiled)

1158 **proved expresse**: manifest in black and white **profecies**: i.e. contents of the Book named after this prophet

1159 **riche**: great, splendid

1160 **with distresse**: by force, violently

1161 **folk**: nation **her**: their

1162 **hold of Him**: be His liegemen; **hold of** was an expression used to indicate rights of property granted by, and entailing allegiance to, an overlord

1163 **help** (*pa*): helped

1164 **mervayl to here**: (the story of which is) a marvel to hear

1167–8 'That He assisted those who were faithful to the false creed (i.e. the Gentiles) to destroy those who were false to the true faith (i.e. the Jews)'

1169 **Hit was sene in that sythe that**: That became apparent in that time when

1170 **that**: who **Juyne** (*old gen pl*: OE '*Jewena*'): of the Jews, Jewish

1171 **solie**: throne **solemne**: stately, magnificent (Solomon, the greatest of the earlier kings of Judah, had been responsible for the building and furnishing of the temple and the royal palaces of Jerusalem)

1172 **late**: slow, backward

1174 **let lyght by**: set little value on, had no respect for **law**: religious law, creed, faith

1175 **him** (*dat*): for him, against him

1176 **Nabugo de nozar**: Nebuchadnezzar

1177 **proude**: bold, formidable

1179 **hent** [seized] **of the beste**: took captive some of those of birth and status

1182 **duk**: commander **dit hem withinne**: closed up those on the inside

1183 **so bigge baytayled**: most sturdily battlemented

1184 **stalle hem thereoute**: hold back those on the outside

1186 'Energetic skirmishing arose, much harm was received'

1187 'A belfry [moveable tiered platform used in siege warfare] in the fashion of (i.e. resembling) a bastion (= turret) at every drawbridge'

1188 **seven sythe**: seven times (*uninflected plural after quantifier*)

1189 **True tulkes**: trusty men **teveled**: did battle

1190 **big brutage of borde**: sturdy parapet made of wood

1191 **of**: off

1192 **two yere**: see footgloss to 1188

1193 **upon long**: after a long time

1194 **Fast fayled hem the fode**: food was quickly running out for them; **hem** is a *recapitulatory pronoun*

- 1195 **sarre**: more sorely
1197 **riche**: great, magnificent
1198 **Fro that**: from the time that, i.e. once
1199 **And thay stoken so strayt**: and they (were) confined so narrowly
1200 **forselet**: stronghold
1201–2 **a counsel him takes With**: takes counsel with; **him** is reflexive: 'for himself'
1202 **blench**: trick, stratagem
1203 **ere any steven rised**: before any cry arose, i.e. without any of the besiegers raising the alarm (cf. 1778)
1204 **oste**: host, troops, i.e. the besieging army
1205 **ne** (*not anomalous in this sort of subclause*: cf. 225) *should be ignored in translation*
1208 **Riche**: great ones, noblemen **her**: their
1209 **lepes**: leap; -s for present plural (see p. xviii)
1211 **By that was all**: by then, all were
1212 **flot**: troop, army

1214 **his pere** [peer]: i.e. his opposite number or opponent among the Judaeans nobility

1215 **with:** by

1216 **gentyle:** noblemen **forjusted:** out-jousted

1217 **And presented were:** And they were handed over; *omission of pronoun subject* **richest:** most powerful, i.e. in overall command

1219 'And he (Nebuchadnezzar) the **faynest** [gladdest] man alive to have his enemies in his power'

1220 **hem to:** to them

1221 and 1222 **his:** i.e. the Jewish king Zedekiah's

1223 Babylon was the chief city of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom of Chaldea **riche:** great, splendid

1224 **done:** put **drye there his wyrdes:** there to endure his fate

1225 **so:** thus

1226–7 '**Nas hit** [it was not] because of Nebuchadnezzar or because of his noblemen that that other man (i.e. Zedekiah) ... ' **pryde:** pomp, grandeur

1229 that him before keped: who (i.e. the Father) before then had protected him

1230 He (Zedekiah) is the implied subject of **trespast**

1231 To colde were: too ineffectual would have been **and:** (even if it had been) combined with

1232 Yet take Torkye hem with: and even add Turkey to both of them **her:** their, i.e. the Jews'

1237–8 'He was commander-in-chief of Nebuchadnezzar's army and a powerful man in his own right, the captain of Nebuchadnezzar's cavalry, conducting Nebuchadnezzar's campaigns'

1239 'He broke through the gate-barriers at once and then (broke into) the city'

1241 What (*interjection*): lo! **maystery:** feat, achievement

1242 'The best (i.e. the chief soldiers) had left with the man who had governed the city' (see **1201–2**)

1244 on wyf had ben: one woman would have been

1245 noght forthy: not for that reason, i.e. none the less for that

1247 **of swettest**: some very lovely; **of** *indicates members of a class* (cf. 1343)

1248 **her**: their

1250 'Married women and young girls, their bellies they slashed'

1251 **That**: so that

1253 **of**: by

1255 'With fetters, fastened under the horses' bellies, upon their feet'

1257 **syt**: misery **that sumtyme**: they who at one time

1258–60 **Now are ... That sumtyme**: now are they ... those who once

1260 **syres and burdes**: as lords and ladies

1264 **all ... that**: all those who

1265–7 The **-en inflexion** in **Pulden, Dighen, dungen, kyllen** indicates *plural subject* (i.e. 'they')

1265 **of**: off **her**: their

1267 **hem kyllen**: they (the Chaldeans) kill them (the maidens)

1273 **That bere** (*pa*) **the lamp upon loft**: which bore aloft the lamplight **evermore**: constantly

1274 **the *sancta sanctorum***: the holy of holies (the innermost sanctuary of the temple where the Ark of the Covenant was kept) **there selcouth was ofte**: where many miracles happened

1275–6 **candelstik**: candelabrum, stand for lamps **the crowne** refers to the band of gold surmounting the altar (= the raised stand or table on which incense and sacrifices were offered, the Old Testament prototype of the Christian communion table)

1277 **gredirne**: grating, lattice

1278 **so**: very, most

1280 **vyoles**: small glass drinking vessels **vertuous** is here used in its older sense of ‘possessed of power or efficacy’ – the reference being to the magic properties regularly attributed to precious **stones** in medieval lapidaries (= jewel handbooks)

1282 **precious** suggests both the spiritual and material worth of the place, since the word could mean both (a) valuable and beautiful, and (b) sacred, holy (*MED precious(e 2)*)

1283 gazafylace: gazophylacium (the box in which offerings to the temple were received) **to swythe gret noubre:** (amounting) to a very great sum

1285–6 All he spoyled ... That: he seized as booty ... all that **mony a sad yere:** many a year of serious concentration

1287–8 quoyntyse ... clene to worke: artistry in fashioning perfectly **clene** is in both lines used in its aesthetic sense: 'with nice exactness' (1287), 'perfectly wrought' (1288)

1289 love: praise, honour (*a separate verb from 'lovy' [love]*)

1290 The house: i.e. the temple

1294 'Goes around plundering the remoter parts of Israel' (**hynes:** corners)

1295 chargede: loaded (with booty) **the cheftayn:** i.e. Nebuchadnezzar

1296 catel: chattels, goods

1297 Presented: handed over to, committed to (cf. 1217)

1298 while her world lasted: in their time

1299 Mony a semely syre son: many a goodly son of a lord; *possessive -s was often dropped before* **son rich:** great, magnificent

1300 proudest: grandest **prophetes:** prophets'

1301 **As**: such as

1302 **devine noble**: a pre-eminent 'diviner', i.e. (a) one skilled in the interpretation of dreams, portents, etc; (b) prophet, expounder of God's will and decrees

1303 **moder childe**: mother's son; *most familial nouns could remain uninflected in the genitive, as they had been in OE* **modity** [brave] qualifies **childe then**: than

1305 **conquest**: won by battle

1307 **law**: creed, doctrinal law (cf. 1174)

1308 **the pris**: the best

1311–12 **avayed ... Never yet nas** (= *ne was*): had never before heard of; *the double negative is regular in ME*

1313 **sesed** (legal term): took possession of

1314 **over all**: above all else, without compare **Israel Dryhtyn**: the Lord of Israel

1315 **god**: goods, valuables **gay**: fine, splendid

1317 **tried**: special

1318 **as he right hade**: as he was right to do

1319 And there he wrought as the wyse: and in that he acted like a prudent man

1320 let of hem lyght: rated them lightly, i.e. treated them with disrespect (cf. 1174) **him myght have lumpen worse:** to him there might have befallen a worse fate (cf. 424)

1321 riche: great man **his lyve** (*dat of 'lif'*): during his lifetime (cf. 173)

1324 'And his name was inscribed as that of the earthly god'

1325 And all thurgh: and all this came about through (the) **fro:** from the time that, i.e. after

1326 gave hit him: expressed this fact to him **samples:** illustrative instances

1327 That he: so that he (= Nebuchadnezzar) **by the laste:** at last, in the end

1328 maysterful: autocratic, tyrannous

1331 nedes moste: needs must, necessarily had to

1334 He (*recapitulatory pron*): i.e. Belshazzar **stabled the regne:** securely established the royal power

- 1335 **biggest**: strongest, most sturdily built (of cities): cf. 1183
- 1337 **began**: started (his reign) **him**: to him
- 1341 **false fantummes of fendes**: devils in false and deluding forms
- 1342 **tre**: wood
- 1343 **of** *can be ignored in translation* (see footgloss to 1247)
- 1346 **And**: if **reden him right**: give him what he asks for (cf. G 373)
- 1347 **to**: in such a way as to
- 1351 **for to welde**: ‘to wield’, at his disposal; on **for** + **to** + *infinitive*, see p. xxv
- 1352 **never the later**: nevertheless, despite that **ladies**: noblewomen (see footgloss to Pe 453)

1353 **curious**: elaborate

1354 **notyng**: making use, partaking **metes**: dishes (*mete* means 'food'; *flesch* was the term for 'meat') **nice**: foolish, i.e. foppish, frivolous

1358 'To give public witness to his vainglory'

1359 **nice**: (morally) stupid, gross **all noghty thing use**: to engage in every kind of depravity (**noghty** is much stronger than *ModE* 'naughty')

1360 **Bot if**: unless

1362 **con sprynge**: spread

1366 **kythyne** (*gen pl*) **kyng**: king of peoples

1368 **kythe him for lege**: acknowledge him as their liege-lord, i.e. pay him formal homage

1370 **ladies**: noblewomen

1371–2 **rose**: extol riche: great, noble **soghte ... to**: made their way to

bold: fine, great

- 1373 **so**: very
1376 **to much nye were**: would be too much trouble
1377 **so**: very, extremely **big**: sturdy, strong
1379 **plek altherfayrest**: fairest place of all
1381 **wonder**: wonderfully **wruxled**: ?set up
1382 **clene**: skilfully, flawlessly
1383 **Troched**: ?pinnaced **bitwene** (*adverbial*): in between, here and there **twenty spere lenthe**: at intervals of twenty spear-lengths; *uninflected plural after quantifier*
1384 'And at more frequent intervals bedecked all around with outspread **palle** [drapery, celebratory cloth-hangings]' (n.)
1385 'The estate which was enfolded within the **poursent** [circumscribing boundary]'
1386 **large**: broad
1389 **of pryde**: splendid, magnificent **passande**: surpassing
1390 'Both in workmanship, in wondrousness, and in its encircling wall'

- 1391 **houses:** i.e. living quarters and offices **halle:** the main public apartment of a court, mansion, etc **to hit mede:** ?in proportion to it (i.e. proportionate with the size and splendour of the palace)
- 1392 'Built so wide in its ground-level extent that horses could gallop (in its courtyard)'
- 1394 **Dere:** great (men)
- 1395 **upon bench:** i.e. at table
- 1396 'Brightly shone the gems in his splendid throne'
- 1397 **hiled:** covered
- 1398–9 **side-bordes:** tables running down lengthwise from the transverse head table or **dese**, at which sat the host and guests of honour **bounet:** made ready, set **the dere selven:** the great (man) himself, i.e. Belshazzar
- 1404 **thereby:** i.e. hanging from the trumpets (cf. *G* 117)
- 1405 **skeles:** platters
- 1406 **therewith:** (came) with them, i.e. with the **bredes** [roast meat dishes]
- 1407 **Lyfte logges thereover:** with (lids in the shape of) buildings raised up over them

1409–11 describe the metalwork of the vessels beneath the paper lids
1412, 1413 **blonkene** [*of horses*] and **nakryne** [*of kettledrums*] reflect the old genitive plural inflexion (OE *-ena*)
1414 **tulket amonges**: sounded as well
1415 **sware**: answer
1416 **bougounes busch**: the striking of drumsticks **so thikke**: very rapidly
1417 ‘In this manner serving took place many a time all around the hall’; **sythe** and **course** (1418) are both uninflected plurals after quantifiers
1418 **before the self lorde**: in the presence of the lord himself
1419 **There**: where **love**: loved ones, i.e. the concubines
1422 **foles**: loses his wits
1423 **on wyde**: widely, all around **wenches**: ‘floozyies’
1424 **about by the woves**: all around him along the walls (where the barons are seated at the side tables: see 1397–8)
1426 **he caght** [adopted] **by himselven**: i.e. the **counsayle** [idea] was of his own, not another’s, suggestion; contrast 1619

1427 ‘The lord calls loudly to his **marschal** [the official who managed the hall]’

1428 **lause**: open

1429 **vessel**: vessels, plate

1430–32 **that** [which] in 1429 introduces these lines as well as 1429b

1431 **Conquerd**: gained by fighting, won **of**: out of, from

1433 **fylles**: fill; *northern inflection for plural imperative* (see p. xviii)

1434 **of hem lape**: drink out of them **hem²**: i.e. the **ladies**

1435 **That**: i.e. the fact they are held dear (1434b)

1436 **Baltazar**: Belshazzar’s (see footgloss to 1149–50 and cf. 1314)

1437 **touched to the tresour**: related to the treasure-keeper

1440a is governed by **was** (1439): ‘And many a cupboard [‘board’ or table for drinking vessels, i.e. sideboard] was covered ... ’

1441 **jueles**: precious objects, treasures

1443–4 **hade into place**: brought thither **gay**: splendid (on the **auter** [altar-table] and its **coroune** [surmounting band of gold], see footgloss to 1275–6)

1445–9 That had ben blessed before with ... Now is set for to: That which (i.e. the altar) before had been consecrated by ... is now set in place in order to

1446 **bestene** (*gen pl*: cf. 1412–13): of beasts **busily**: zealously

1447 **solemne**: ceremonial, ritual **savour**: smell, odour

1448 **Before**: in the presence of **in lovyng Himselfen**: in the praising of Him

1450 **Before**: in the presence of

1451 **vesselle**: vessels

1452 **curious**: intricate, elaborate

1453–5 **Salomon set him seven yere ... For to**: Solomon set himself for over seven years to ...

1454 **syence**: skill, art **him sende**: sent/gave to him

1455, 1458 **clene**: skilfully fashioned

1458–63 The lidded cups are designed to resemble castles (cf. the castle at G 794–802, where much of the same vocabulary is used): they have surmounting **banteles** [projecting tiers] supporting a battlement (**under batelment**), in imitation of a castle wall that is **Enbaned** (i.e. provided with a projecting parapet at its crenellated summit), the metal being carved to project out and up (**fyled out**) in visual images or **figures** of wonderfully ingenious forms (**ferlyly schappes**). The **coprounes** [surmounting tops] of the **covacles** [lids] which **on the cuppe reres** [rise up over the cup] have likewise been **formed out** [fashioned to project out] into miniatures of the **fylyoles longe** [extended slender towers and turrets] rising from the living-quarters above and behind the outer wall of a castle, with **Pinacles ... apert** [neatly fashioned spires] **pyght there** [set thereover] that **profert bitwene** [juttet into view here and there]

- 1464 **And all bolled above:** and all around (could be seen surfaces which were) over-embossed; another decorative motif seen on other vessels – birds in foliage (cf. 1410) – is now described
- 1465 **withinne:** i.e. in the foliage
- 1466 **As:** represented as if **proudly:** in their splendour
- 1470 **Alabaundaynes:** red gems
- 1472 **pynkardines:** ?carnelians
- 1473 **So:** in this manner **trayled:** decorated with sprays **trifled:** filled with ornamental motifs
- 1474 **By:** over, across **the brurdes all umbe:** all around the surfaces
- 1476 **flyes:** butterflies
- 1478 **candelstik:** candelabrum **by acost:** alongside

- 1479 'Set (so) finely upon the pillars (see 1271) as to cause general admiration'
- 1480 **hit**: its **bases**: i.e. the stepped tiers that form a base (cf. *Pe* 1000)
- 1484 **As**: represented as if
- 1485 **Inmong**: in among **launces**: branches
- 1487–8 **morteres of**: bowls containing **merked without** **With**: decorated on the outside with (images of)
- 1489 **serges**: wax candles
- 1490 **truly**: in its own proper place
- 1491 **sancta sanctorum**: holy of holies (see footgloss to 1274) **there**: where
- 1492 'Spoke in mystical manner to the prophets especially intimate with Him'
- 1494 **Displeased**: took offence **in that plyt strange**: in that improper scene
- 1495 **with javeles**: by louts **were** (*subj*): should be
- 1496 'Which were once established as sacred in His presence'

- 1500 **as the devel**: ‘as Hell’ **there**: where
- 1501 **wlates therewith**: is nauseated by that
- 1502 **That**: so that **porvayes a mynde**: decides on a course of action
- 1503 **haste of His ire**: precipitate wrath
- 1504 **warnyng**: pre-notification, advance warning **that ... thoghte**: which seemed to them prodigious; **thoghte** is *past tense of the impersonal verb ‘think’ [seem], not the personal verb ‘thenk’ [think]*; **hem** is *dative*
- 1507 **Bede us thereoffe**: offer us (drink) out of them
- 1508 **Wassayl**, < OE *wes hal* [be in good health], was a salutation used when presenting drink; it here announces a festive attempt to swallow drink at one draught (1517–20) and is equivalent to ‘Let’s drain our glasses!’
- 1510 **Kyppe**: snatch, seize
- 1511 **birlen these other**: other servants pour out drink
- 1512 ‘And each **man** [servant] pairs himself with his own master alone’, i.e. each servant serves only his own master; the drink is dispensed, not by the host’s serving men for the company at large, but by the guests’ servants, who unceremoniously race to get liquor and a good cup for their masters (1509–10)

1514 riche rok: noble citadel **hit** refers to the vessels collectively (cf. the collective singular **vessel** (= vessels) at 1429 and 1451)

1515 Clatering is parallel with **rynging** (1513), both nouns being dependent on **There was** (1513)

1516 ‘Which (i.e the cup-lids) sang out as sweetly as a melody from a psaltery [stringed instrument]’

1517–20 Belshazzar begins the game (announced by the cry of **Wassayl** at 1508) of draining the glass in one go; the other guests join in the **mirthe** [sport] and follow suit at 1519–20

1517 that he myghte: all that he could

1518 dressed: made ready, i.e. equipped with drink

1519 because of that mirthe: on account of that festive game

1520 ‘Whatever each one possessed (in the way of drink that had been) **helde** [poured out] for him, he took a continuous pull at from the cup’

1521 So long: very long, for a long time **likked:** drank

1522 and her grace calles: and implore their (= the gods’) favour

1523 That: which **stille:** without sound and/or motion

1524 hem astel: escaped from them

1525 ‘The **gaules** [?drunken revellers] nevertheless call on all the fine golden gods’

1527 puns on the literal and metaphorical senses of **highly** and **heven:** ‘Exalted them (a) as high as the skies, (b) as greatly as if eternal bliss (which only the true God can bestow) was in their gift’

- 1531 **pryncipal**: royal
- 1532 **In contrary of**: in the part opposite to, over against **that**: where
- 1533 **poyntel**: stylus
- 1534 **grymly**: in a manner terrifying to see
- 1535 **faylande the wryste**: lacking even a wrist-joint
- 1536 **Pared on the parget**: made incisions on the plaster
- 1540 **strayned**: fell with force on, compressed
- 1541 'His knees proceed to come together (i.e. knock) and his hams clench'
- 1542 **plattyng his paumes**: beating his hands together **displayes his lerns** is obscure (n.)
- 1543 **romyes as a rad ryth**: roars like a frightened bullock
- 1545 **runische**: strange, undecipherable
- 1546 **scrof**: ?sharp
- 1547 **coltour**: coulter (the iron cutter in front of a ploughshare) **tho forwes**: i.e. those furrows we see; **tho** [*those, these*] is *exophoric* (cf. *G* 1112)

1548 **of**: out of, from

1550 'As soon as the king in his distress was able to speak'

1551 **to** (*adverbial*): to him, to that place

1552 'To examine the writing (and) what it meant, and clearly to tell him'

1554 **skelten**: appeared **skylle**: sense (of the words)

1555 **couth**: who could; *omission of relative pronoun* **on**: one

1556 **ledische lore**: national script

1557 **tale**: statement **tokened tho draghtes**: those characters represented

1559 'And bade that **segges** [men] be searched for throughout the city'; *verbs of command were followed by the active, rather than the passive, infinitive*

1560 **warlowes other**: other sorcerers

1561 **demerlayk**: the occult arts **devine**: interpret

1567 **That**: so that

1568 **gay**: fine, splendidly **purpre** [purple] was the colour of imperial and royal dress

1569 **clos**: fastened

1570 **of pure clergye**: of *clergy* [learning] properly so-called (i.e. theology)

1571 **the thrid he schal hatte**: he will be called (i.e. rank as) the third

1572 **richest**: most splendid, greatest **to ride with myselven**: (fit) to ride in state at my own side

1573 **tee** (*subj*) **he**: let him go

1574 **cry**: proclamation

1576 **As**: such as **sathrapas**: satraps, wise men

1577 **walkyries**: practitioners of magic arts

1578 **rede**: interpret

1579 **Sorsers of exorsismus**: sorcerers who call up and cast out spirits
clerkes is used in both an ecclesiastical sense ('clerics') and a scholarly one ('learned men'); these men are the 'scholars' who form the priesthood of a pagan religion

1580 **letter**: lettering **lewed** combines its strict sense ('lay, lacking the clerical ability to read and interpret') with its looser one ('ignorant, stupid')

1581 'As they would have been had they looked inside the leather of my left boot'

1583 **What**: lo! oh!

- 1584 **hyed**: hastened (his men) on, i.e. gave urgent commands
- 1586 'She who was the official queen (cf. 1351) heard his angry abuse from as far away as her chamber' (**chamber**: a private apartment in a court, as opposed to the public hall, where Belshazzar is)
- 1588 **chaungande**: alarming
- 1589 **lause**: dispel
- 1590 **grece**: 'degrees', stairs
- 1592 **of worschip**: respectful **wyse** as applied to **speche** means 'socially wise', i.e. 'courteous'
- 1594 **Ever laste thy lif**: may your life last for ever
- 1595 **for redles hereinne**: out of helplessness in this matter (**for** + *adjective* = because of being)
- 1596 **lewed**: (too) ignorant, uneducated
- 1597 **And has**: i.e. when you have **in thy holde**: in your control, at your disposal; the reference is to Daniel as one of the Jewish captives (1297–1302)
- 1600 **open uch a hid thing of**: make known all things hitherto unknown with respect to

1602 **anger**: distress

1603 **in stoundes**: at various times

1604 **He**: i.e. Daniel **his**: i.e. Nebuchadnezzar's **dere**: all-important

1607 **sped**: efficacy

1610 'Your great father commanded his name to be "Baltazar" '; Daniel and his three companions (1301) were given Chaldean names when they were chosen to serve the king, Daniel being called 'Baltazar' (Daniel 4:9)

1611 **That**: who **derne** [secret] **connynge**: occult arts

1614 **pris of the worlde**: the best in the world

1615 **Sende ... to sech him**: send word ... to have him sought out

1616 'And have him brought to you in a respectful manner to give you a solution'

1617–18 contain wordplay on **merk** [dark, obscure] and **merked** [visibly recorded] and on the etymological sense of **declar** [make clear]: Daniel will explain the obscure message as clearly as the letters are to be seen on the clay-plaster surface of the wall

1623–4 thou true were Prophete: you were a veracious prophet (i.e. one who delivered truths) **that prayed my fader:** which my father made prey of (i.e. despoiled)

1626 ‘(And that) your soul (is) filled with the wisdom (which is able) to reveal true things’

1627 Godes gost ... that: the spirit of God who

1628 uch hid that heven-kyng myntes: every hidden thing (= mystery and obscurity) in what God ordains/purposes

1630 Wordplay on **Wit** [understand, know] and **wyt** [sense, meaning]

1632 I quyte: I will pay; *present tense with future sense*

1633 redes: interpret **by right:** rightly, correctly **hit to resoun brynges:** make sense of it

1634–5 the tyxt [text] of the tede lettres (i.e. what words the grouped letters form) stands in contrast with **mater** and **mod** [mind, intention, purpose], which refer to the content and meaning of those words

1636 And (*redundant in ModE*) here introduces a main clause after a subclause (if: **1633**)

1637 Apyke thee: (I shall) array you

1640 be baroun upon bench: i.e. be a lord of the highest rank and fit to sit at the dais in hall

1642 Riche: great, splendid **rede thee our Lorde:** may our Lord guide you

1644 cherished: favoured and advanced

1646 ‘With all the world at his will, to dispose of as it pleases him’ (**welde** (*subj*): let him ‘wield’)

1647–8 ‘Whomsoever he willed to prosper, prosperity befell that person, and whoever’s death he might desire he struck down at once’;
as before adverb functions as intensifier

1649, 1650 him liked: it pleased him

1651–2 ‘In this way was the **note** [noteworthiness, greatness] of Nebuchadnezzar **noted** [made famous], and his power-base firmly established, by the mighty Lord’

1653 hope: inkling, intimation

1654 ‘And that all kinds of power emanated precisely from that Prince’

1655 that: i.e. that **hope** (**1653**)

1656 of myght as himselven: of power equal to his

1658 **lordeschyp**: sovereign territory, dominions

1659 **insyght to**: regard for

1661 'Then he does not stop (short) of blasphemy (that was such as) to disparage the Lord'

1662 **mete to Godes**: equal to God's

1663 **me likes**: it pleases me

1664 **His angeles that weldes**: He who rules over His angels

1669–70 **Was not this ilke word wonnen** [brought] **of his mouthe**

Ere then [than]: This same speech was not yet out of his mouth before ...

1670 **Soverayn sawe**: words of the Sovereign

1673 **most**: must

1675 **As best bite on the bent of**: graze in the field like an animal on

- 1678 **the solie of his solemnete**: the throne of his regal state
- 1679 **countre**: region, district
- 1680 **there**: where
- 1681–2 **hoped non other Bot a best that he be**: assumed nothing other than that he were an animal
- 1683 **fogge**: grass **mete**: food
- 1684 **when erbes were fallen**: when grasses had died back
- 1685 ‘Thus he accounts himself a cow, he who had been a great king’
- 1686 **While**: until **seven sythes were overseyed someres**: summers had elapsed seven times
- 1687 **By that**: by that time **thye**: ?tuft
- 1688 **of**: out of, from
- 1689 **Fax fyltered and felt**: hair (that was) tangled and matted together **flosed**: ?formed a coat
- 1690 **schyre-wykes**: ‘groin corners’, loins
- 1692 ‘Where many a burdock stuck it together like paste’
- 1693 **ibrad**: spread out over; *though not frequent in this dialect, prefixed i- (< OE ge-) often marked past participles and occasionally (as here) past tenses*

1695 and under (*adverbial*): and underneath them were **campe**:
bristly, stiff

1697 as the kyte (*uninflected gen*) **pauue**: like the kite's claw

1699 who: i.e. who it was that

1700 kever when Him liked: restore whenever it pleased Him; *the verb is impersonal, as at 1663, which this line echoes*

1701 him his wyt that: his wits to him who

1702 That: so that **com**: came

1703 loved: praised (see footgloss to 497)

1704 in hande: in His hands, in His power

1705 agayn: back

1706 bowed him to: went to meet him (translating *requisierunt me* [sought unto me] at Daniel 4:33)

1707 in his own hue: in the visible form proper to it; contrast 1689–90

1708 state: i.e. regal authority, pomp

1710 set hem at little: rated them at little worth, i.e. scorned to heed them

1711 agayns: i.e. in refusal of the honour due to

1713 **vanyte unclene**: indecent vainglory

1717 **in thede** [people, nation]: in public

1718 **That**: those things which, i.e. vessels **with**: by

1719 **Lovande**: praising (cf. 1703) **lese**: false

1726 **By uch figure**: according to (the formation of the words by) each of the written symbols **as our Fader likes**: as it pleases our Father, i.e. as God has willed them to be

1728 **thretes thee of thyn unthryfte**: threatens you with (the consequences of) your wickedness

1729 **thenke**: intend

1730 **menes as much as**: means as much as to say (that)

1731 I.e. has assigned a precise figure to the duration of your kingdom

1732 'And completed it (i.e. the number) truly to the farther limit (of the assigned span)'

1734 **walt in weghtes to henge**: cast into the scales to hang (there)

1735 'And the good deeds of it are found to be very few', i.e. there is virtually nothing positive to put in the moral scales

1736 involves minor wordplay: **PHARES** literally **folwes** **TECHAL** as the next word, but the condemnation it announces also follows **for** [because of] – i.e. follows on from, is a consequence of – the **fautes** announced by **TECHAL**, which are both moral *defects* and (see *MED* sv *faute* 1(a)) the *deficiencies* in the weight of the good deeds (1735)

1738 **Departed**: divided, split up

1740 **of menske**: from position of dignity, from honourable status

1741 **wyse**: wise man

1742 **as forward hit asked**: as (Belshazzar's) pledge required (see 1636–40 and 1568–73)

1745 **the duk selven**: i.e. Belshazzar

1746 **him**: to him (Daniel)

1748 'As the man established as the third most in the confidence of the king'

1749 Highest of all other: highest of all, higher than all others (for the idiom, cf. 701)

1750 ‘Proceeding after Belshazzar, inside or outside the town’ (**bow** [go] is here a separate verb from **bowe** [bow] at **1746**); the reference is to ceremonial precedence (cf. 1639 and 1572–3), where Daniel’s ranking as the third man of the nation would be most publicly apparent

1751 also faste: as fast as possible, at once

1755 that ilke derk after: after that same period of darkness

1756 dalt was that ilke dome: that same sentence had been executed

1760 drives: rises, spreads

1761 Thorgh the lyst of the lyft: along the (lower) edge of the sky (i.e. the horizon)

1763 Seten: they sat **songen:** they sang

1764 ‘Then each social gathering disperses very far into the night’

1765 with blisse was kayred: was conducted amid rejoicing

1766 ‘Let him get (there) as much rest as it pleases him – he rose never again after that’

- 1769 **at the self tyme**: at that very time
- 1770 **Of hem**: of them, i.e. of their presence
- 1771 **these** is *exophoric* (see footgloss to G 1112)
- 1772 **proud**: great, grand
- 1773 **ledes** [men] **of armes**: i.e. armed soldiers
- 1776 **Ascaped over the skyre wateres**: slipped over the clear waters (surrounding the city: cf. 1380)
- 1778 **ere any steven rised**: before any cry rose, i.e. without any alarm being raised (cf. 1203)
- 1779 **Withinne an houre of the night**: within one hour into the night
- 1781 **palayce pryncipal**: royal palace
- 1783 **brestes so highe**: burst most loudly
- 1784 **that scomfyted** [threw into confusion] **mony**: which caused widespread panic

1788 **That:** so that, in such a manner that

1789 **in his cortyn:** within his bed-curtaining

1790 **and foule dispysed:** and (his body) grossly treated with contempt

1792 'Now is a dog that lies (dead) in a ditch as **dere** [important, valued] (as he is)'

1795 **seses:** he takes possession of (*sese* is a semi-technical legal term: cf. 1313 and *Pe* 417)

1796 **that bowed** [went] **him after:** who followed him, i.e. whose overlord he now was

1797 **lost:** lost possession of, i.e. conquered

1799 **that holy were maked:** which had been consecrated

1800 **corsted:** 'cursed', consigned to perdition (temporally and spiritually: cf. 1802–3) **cached thereinne:** seized in the midst of it

1801 **Done doun of his dyngnete:** brought down from his noble status

1802 **of:** from

1803 'And in addition debarred from the delights above (i.e. in heaven), I believe'

1804 **late bitydes:** late will it befall (him); an understatement: Belshazzar will never enjoy the beatific vision promised to the pure in heart (see 27–8)

1805 thrynne wyse [a threefold manner] refers to the three major exempla of the poem: the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the punishment of Belshazzar

1806 to-cleves in corage dere: makes a deep cut in the precious heart

1809 quoyntyse: elegance of clothing and ornamentation

1810 Alluding to the sixth Beatitude, which is returned to at the conclusion of each narrative exemplum (**176–8**, **192**; **552**, **576**, **595**; **1055**; **1804**) as well as in this conclusion to the poem as a whole

1811 ‘May He send us the grace to go fine in our array’; a prayer was a common form of closure that occurs also in *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain*

1812 That: so that **there**: where

1 Jerome, Prologue to *Commentary*.

² See e.g. Luke 23:5, Acts 10:37, and see also Roger Bacon's discussion of the term in *Opus Maius* I, 346.

³ See Luke 11:29–32, Matthew 12:38–41.

NB: Footglosses are selective (see pp. xxxii-xxxiii); see the *Glossary* for words not included

1 'Patience is a condition (of such a kind that), though ... '

2 **with hethyng other elles**: by mistreatment or by something else

4 **ho**: she, i.e. **Suffraunce** (3), a noun of feminine gender in the French language from which it was derived

5 **For whoso**: for if anyone; **whoso** often has conditional force (cf. C 1)

6 **And who**: and whoever

7 **to abide the bur**: to take the blow

8 **Then**: than **thagh me think ille**: although it seems to me disagreeable

10–12 'How Matthew told what his master taught his **meyny** [retinue]: eight blessed states he promised them and to each one a **mede** [reward] of its own distinct kind **for hit desert** [for its merit] in a separate way' (cf. C 23–5)

14 **hores:** theirs

16 **her:** their

17 **her harme:** i.e. their sins **wepes:** *northern dialect present plural* (see p. xviii)

26 **the gracious Godes sunes:** the sons of gracious God

28 **as I ere sayde:** i.e. as in the case of the first Beatitude (see 14)

30 'If we were willing to court these ladies by imitating their qualities'

34 'He that had one (of these virtues) would be blessed – all of them would be even better'

37–8 ‘For in the text where these two are included in the subject matter (cf. *Pe* 944), they are set in one and the same **forme** [formula], (as) the **forme** [first] and the last’; i.e. they appear as the framing first and last and their reward is phrased similarly (see 14 and 28)

39 ‘And, in the **quest** [pursuit] conducted by their **quoyntyse** [wisdom], they acquire one and the same reward’

40 **hit are of on kynde**: they are of one and the same nature

42 **like other greme** (*subj of impers verbs*): whether it please or whether it gall, i.e. like it or not

43 **thagh man pine thinke**: though it seems to one a torment

44 **maugre his mun**: ‘despite his mouth’, i.e. in defiance of his own wishes (cf. 54) **nede**: necessarily

46 ‘Since I am placed in the company of them both together, I must necessarily suffer’

47–8 **is me lyghtloker hit like ... Then**: it is less difficult for me to like it (i.e. not be displeased) ... than

51 **on lyve** [alive]: i.e. ever, at any time

52 **Other ... other**: either ... or

53–6 ‘What would grumbling achieve for me other than to invite more trouble? It would be much (i.e. surprising) if he did not force me (to go) **maugre my chekes** [despite myself, against my will], and then I would have to endure coercion, with **unthonk** [ill-will] as my **mede** [reward], I **the** [that, who] might have bowed to his bidding with **bongre** [good will] as my **hyre** [wages]’

58 ‘(Trying) to put himself in safety, he brings trouble upon himself

59 **Wil ye**: if you will

61 **in termes of Judee**: within the boundaries of the lands of the Jews

62 **Gentyle** (*gen pl*) **prophete**: prophet to the Gentiles (= non-believers); Nineveh, to which Jonah is sent, was the ancient capital of the Assyrian Empire, which did not worship the god of the Jews, to whom the town is only later converted (see 404–5)

69 **hit are**: they are

70 **abide**: (a) wait, (b) endure, suffer

71 **Bot venge me on her vilany**: but will revenge myself on their wickedness

72 **me** in both half lines is dative ('for me')

76 **And**: if

77 **typpede schrewes**: violent villains

78 'If I go with those tidings, they will take me straight away'

83–4 'Unless my beneficent God would wish such harm to me, in punishment for some sin, as to want me killed'

85 **At all periles**: whatever the risks, i.e. come what may

86 **I wil me**: I will betake myself; *omission of verb of motion after modal* (cf. 202) **that he ne wayte after**: in the direction of which he won't be looking

91 nolde (= *ne wolde*) ... **no thing non**: *multiple negatives are normal in ME; they here carry the alliteration, and give emphasis to Jonah's response of 'No!'*

92 fale of: ?unconcerned with

96 with rybaudes: by ruffians

98 fare: passage, journey

99 'He agrees terms with the mariners and pays their fee'

101–8 'Then he stepped on those planks, and they get their tackle ready, hoist the sail-yard, fasten the cables, swiftly weigh anchor at the windlass, quickly attached to the bowsprit the bowline carried in reserve for that purpose, take hold of the ropes, the main sail falls; they set the ship to port side and "win the luff" (i.e. change course in order to catch the wind): the pleasant breeze at their back finds the bosom of the sail – it swings this lovely ship swiftly away from the harbour'

108 me: *a so-called 'ethic dative', used to express interest in the scene or action (cf. G 1905), which can be omitted in translation*

110 **daunger**: power

113 **For**: because

114 'He has now placed himself in a situation of even greater peril';
more is *adjectival*

116 'Though he (Jonah) had left Samaria, that God could see no further (than that)'

117 **Yis**: Indeed; *ys* is more emphatic than the normal affirmative *yea*
that burde [behoved] **him be sure**: of that he ought to have been sure

118 'The **carp** [words] which that king said had often made clear to him that fact'

119 **on dese**: on the throne; the **dese** refers literally to the raised platform on which the throne was set

122 **thagh he be stape** [stepped, advanced] **in folly**: even the one who is far gone in folly

123 **Hope ye**: do you think **He ... that**: He who

124 **He ... that**: He who

125 **he ... that**: he (Jonah) who

128 'So that he shot ignominiously too short of his target'

130 **wakes:** is awake **waytes:** looks

131 'He called on that same phenomenon (i.e. the winds) He had fashioned with His own hands'

132 **for:** because

133 **Ewrus** and **Aquiloun** were classical names for, respectively, the east wind and the north wind

143b-44 'so that panic-stricken fishes dared remain nowhere at the sea-bottom because of the roughness (of the sea)' (**rogh:** *adjective for noun*)

148 'The blast bore down on it from behind, so that all their gear shattered'

149 the helme and the sterne: i.e. the tiller at the back of the boat and the rudder attached to it (a pole projecting down outside the stern of the ship and terminating in a blade or paddle)

151–2 then suppe behoved The coge of the colde water: then the ship had to drink of the cold water

153 Yet [and at that] has here reduced force, indicating response to some narrative development (see *MED yet* 4(a)) **cast all thereoute:** jettisoned it all (i.e. everything they have cut free)

155 ‘Those who would fain escape scooped out the harmful water’

156 be manes lode never so luther: however bad a man’s state is; for a similar loose sense of ‘(his) load’, cf. *G* 1284

157 ‘There was busy activity to cast packs overboard’

160 if lethe wolde schape: if relief would (thereby) come about

163 tho wery forwroght (*adj for n*): those weary worn-out ones

164 that gayned him beste: that was most suited to him (i.e. to his creed)

166 devout: sacred

168 ‘And each man according as he worshipped and had bestowed his love’, i.e. according to whichever god he worshipped; **loved** is *here assumed to be the past tense of ‘love’ = ‘praise’, used in the sense of ‘worship’* (see *MED loven* v² 1(d)), *but it could be the past tense of ‘lovy’ = ‘love’*

170 **laweles**: not observing the moral code of any religion; for *law* = ‘creed’, cf. e.g. *C* 1167, 1174

172 **sake**: guilt

173–4 ‘I recommend that we assign lots to each of the men, and whomever the losing lot falls to, cast him out’

176 **Bot**: but that

178 **to hente that falles**: to receive whatever lots fall to them

179 **under hachches**: below deck

181 **him fayled**: he found missing **that he fynde myghte**: that he should have been able to find

182 **jowked**: roosted, lay snoozing

185 'Huddled up by the bilge because of (i.e. to escape) the vengeful violence of the heavens'

188 'May Ragnel in his chains rouse him from his dreams!'; '*there*' + *subjunctive expresses a wish* (cf. G 839)

189 'Then he seizes him ungently by the cloak, at the place where it was clasped' (n.)

193-4 'Quickly have they organized their lots and dealt them out several times, and every time in the end the (losing) lot fell on Jonah'

196 *Singular pronoun **thou** here conveys disrespect (plural 'ye' was used in polite address)*

197-8 'What are you doing at sea, sinful cur, with your vices so foul as to destroy us all?'

199 **no governour ne god on to calle**: no lord or god to call on

200 **when thou slayn worthes**: when you are about to be killed

201 **Of**: from

202 **Whyder in worlde that thou wilt**: to what place in the world are you wanting (to go)

203 thy dome is thee dight: i.e. this is the judgement passed on you

204 Do gif: give; *'do' preceding an imperative gives added admonitory force* (cf. *G* 1533)

208 at a word one (*adverbial*): only with a word

209 for me: because of me

210 For: because

212 Ere gete ye no hap: before that, you will get no good fortune

hope: think, believe

213–14 'He made predictions (of this kind) to them by statements (about himself), so that they understood that he had fled from the face of the noble Lord' (n.)

216 ruyt hem (*refl*): rushed

218 Syn her sayl was hem aslypped: since their sail was lost to them

220 that nolde not bityde: that (i.e. the help they sought) would not come about

222 noght: nothing in her hand: in their power, at their disposal (cf. G 1257), but 221 gives the expression some added literal force

223 nas no comfort to kever: there was no relief to be had **counsel:** recourse

224 ‘Except to sentence Jonah to his **juis** [doom] promptly’

227 ‘By immersing their hands in innocent blood’; the sailors pray that, though they are killing a servant of the Lord (**228**), they are not thereby incurring the guilt of having the blood of an innocent man on their hands; **gyve, blenden, were in 226–8 are subjunctives**

229 by top and by to [toe]: by head and foot

231 ‘No sooner was he thrown out than the tempest ceased’; *the construction with that and ne follows French usage (comparative + ‘que’ + ‘ne’ + verb):* cf. C 982–3

232 ho: she (the sea)

233 ‘Though the tackle of those who tossed on the waves was torn’

235 the depe to serve: to be at the mercy of the sea

236 a swetter: a more welcome (current)

238 on Moyses wyse: i.e. in the Mosaic or Judaic manner (further characterized in the following line)

240 ‘And they acknowledged that He alone, and truly no other, was God’

243–4 ‘For what became of that man, after he sank into the water, would have to be regarded as a wonder (i.e. as the stuff of romance: cf. *G* 28–9), if it were not for (the authority of) Holy Writ’

249 that wye that the water soghte: that man who was heading for the water

250 swiftly swenged him to swepe: swung swiftly to sweep him up

252 Withouten touch of any tothe: without contact with any of the (whale’s) teeth

257 **nade**: had not

259–60 ‘What man could **leve** [believe] that, by any law of **kynde** [nature], any life (= living being) could have remained alighted in him (= the whale) for so long’

262 **Thagh were wanles of wele**: though he had no hope of well-being; *omission of pronoun subject* (cf. 266)

266–7 ‘How he had been **lached** [seized] by a beast out of the boat into the foam, and had plunged into **hit** [its] throat **withouten thret more** [without any further force being exercised, i.e. with eerie ease, without any aggressive effort on the whale’s part]’

270 **rop**: gut **a rode that him thoghte**: which seemed to him to be (in proportion to his own size) a road

272 **blunt in a blob**: fetched up short in a **blob** [?piece of intestine]

276 ‘In that spot was fashioned the lodging place of him who refuses to suffer any hardship’

280 **In wich gut soever he gos:** into whichever gut he goes
282 **of ... pyty thou have** (*imp*): have pity on; *in addressing God,*
singular thou is the norm
283 **fykel:** deceitful, treacherous **false of my herte:** faithless at heart
287 **man:** servant (as in the phrase ‘master and man’)
290 **There:** where
291 **also:** as **one** (*adv*): only, alone
292 **bulk:** hold **there:** where
295 **mesure** [temperateness, restraint] was rich in philosophical
associations: *mesura* was virtue as the ideal mean between extremes
296 ‘Now he that could not (do so) in happiness knows Him in care’

300 Thagh hit little were him with: though it was small in comparison with himself

302 ‘The mighty sea on its back and the beating (of waves) against its sides’

306 the hole ... of hellene wombe: the pit of the belly of Hell

308 of the depe see into the dymme herte: into the dark heart of the deep sea

311 ‘And thy driving currents of countless water-streams’

312 on: one

315 surely: confidently

317 to my wo-stoundes: sufficiently to cause me pangs of woe

319 The pure poplande hourle: the very bubbling sea-surge **playes:** bubbles seethingly; *for this sense of 'play' when applied to liquids, see MED pleien v¹ 9(a)*

320 'I am a creature fallen to the lowest limit of every mountain'

321 'All the (underwater) banks form bars that strongly hold me (captive)'

322 That I may lache no londe: i.e. so that I can't come ashore anywhere

323 releve me, renk: raise me from my prostration, mere man as I am **while thy right slepes:** i.e. while your justice turns a blind eye (to what I deserve)

324 that muckel is to tryste: which is greatly to be trusted

329 'I have long concerned myself with your abstruser truths'

332 'Reject (the salvation available to them through) mercy for something that amounts to nothing'

333 avow that [that which, what] **veray bes holden:** make a vow which will be faithfully kept

335 Wordplay on **hele** [health, well-being] and **hole** [whole, free from defect], which are related words: ‘to *heal*’ = ‘to make *whole*’ and **hole** was used in medical contexts to mean ‘healthy, healed’

336 ‘And I will keep to whatever you command me – take here my **trauthe** [pledged word]’

338 **he him sput** (*subj*): that he should spit him (= Jonah) **spare drye**: bare piece of dry land

344 ‘Belonged exactly to the regions he had refused (as the destination appointed him by God)’

346 **Nylt thou never**: will you never (go)

348 **me gaynes non other**: nothing else will profit me, i.e. I have no option

349 **aproche ... to**: go thither in order to (cf. C 68) **Lo**: behold, see

350 **Lause** was used, with reference to speech, to mean ‘utter’ (cf. G 1766), but collocation with **loken** here also activates its more literal sense of ‘unlock’

354 'Only to press through it was three days' work'

355 'The first day's travel Jonah did without stopping'

358 **tenor of his teme**: purport of the text on which he preached;

teme [theme] was used to refer to the biblical text on which a sermon was based

360 **to noght worthe**: come to nothing, be obliterated

363 **with**: by

364 **lose the swete**: lose the life-blood; *sweat* had in OE verse the sense of '(life-)blood' and retained that sense in the poeticism 'lose/leave the sweat' (= die): see *MED swet(e n¹ (a))*

368 'That their countenances quite altered (i.e. they showed dismay) and they went cold inside'

371 **stille**: submissively, meekly

375 **dust:** ashes

376 'That this penance should find favour with Him who makes accusation against their wrongdoing'

380 'And he dropped into the middle of a heap of ashes'

381 **hasped him umbe:** fastened (it) around himself

386 **Do drive out:** proclaim (cf. footgloss to 204)

387 **bodyes:** persons; *pronominal use of 'body' is calqued on OF 'cors' [body, person]* (cf. G 1237) **quike:** alive

390 **Alle faste frely:** let all fast without stinting (i.e. wholeheartedly) **for:** because of

391 'Stop children from their (breast-)sucking, however much it may grieve them'

392 **Ne best bite:** nor let any animal graze

394 The verb **passe** is understood from the preceding line

395 **forclemmed**: ?sorely afflicted

397 ‘Who knows or can know if it will please the Being ...’

400 **in His mylde amesyng**: in His mild tempering (of His wrath): cf. footgloss to 295 and C 764

401–5 **leven** (401), **leve** (403): leave, desist from **leven** (404): believe
leved on (405): believed in **laften** (405): left, desisted from

402 **stille**: submissively, meekly (cf. 371)

405 **law** refers to the doctrinal and moral directives of a particular
‘creed’ or ‘faith’ (cf. C 1174, 1307)

407 **as he sayde**: as he (i.e. the **prince** (406), the king of the city) had
predicted (see 396–400)

408 **Thagh He other bihyght**: though He had promised something
different

414–16 ‘Was not this same (thing) that is now **worthen** [come to pass] my **word** [statement, i.e. prediction] that I uttered in my country, when you sent your message that I should go to this town to preach your **talent** [will]?’

417 **quoynte**: exquisite

419 **late**: tardy, reluctant

420 **mete**: equal, commensurate (i.e. sufficient) **be mysse never so huge**: however enormous the misdeed

423 **pine**: pain (undertaken as penance)

424 **therefore**: for that reason

427–8 ‘For it would be sweeter to me to **swelt** [perish] at once, it seems to me, than to engage any longer in (the work of expounding) your **lore** [teaching], which thus makes a liar out of me (literally “makes me untruthful”)’

431 **so ronkly to wrathe**: to become so vehemently angry

432 ‘Because of anything that I have so far done or ordained for you?’

- 434 'And goes out towards the east side of that great habitation'
436 'To observe that city (and) what would afterwards happen (to it)'
439–40 'For the place was bare of arching trees that could provide
shelter from the bright (sun) or cast any shade'
442 **sadly**: deeply
443 **did grow of that soyle**: caused to grow out of that ground
447 **lyllede** [?quivered] does not occur elsewhere in ME
450 'Closed on each side, like a house'
451 'An opening on the north (i.e. the coolest) side, and otherwise
none anywhere'
454 'Which a wind constantly **wayved** [moved to and fro], most
mildly and coolingly'

455b–56 ‘Though no sunbeam could, (to) the amount (even) of one of the little specks of dust (within that sunbeam), shine upon that man’; the expression ‘motes [dust particles] in a sunbeam’ was a common one

457 **gay**: fine, splendid **loge**: bower

458 **Lys**: (that) he lies **loltrande**: ?sprawling

459 **So ... he balteres**: so ... that he stumbles about

460 ‘So that about (procuring) any food that day he did not care “the devil a bit” (i.e. a damn)’

462 **there he wone schulde**: where he would in the normal course of things dwell

463 **Effraym or Ermonnes hilles**: the mountains of Ephraim or Hermon

464 ‘Indeed, a finer dwelling place I never wished to possess’

468 **by that**: by the time that

469 **the west**: the west wind **softe**: with all its ‘soft’ quality; *soft* was the epithet that characterized the west wind as opposed to colder and dryer ones

471 **That:** so that

472 **ho:** she (**sunne** (471) *was a feminine noun in OE*) **candel:** i.e. a lit flame

475 **wasted:** burnt up (see *MED wasten* v 2b(b))

476 **ere ever the schalk wyste:** i.e. without the man being aware that it was happening

479 **that myght him not hyde:** either 'who could find no shelter for himself' or 'which could provide him with no shelter'; *the antecedent of that could be man or molde*

482 **what maystery thee thinkes:** what kind of achievement does it seem to you to be

484 **that thou may:** that you are capable of

488b **to:** too

489 **Yet:** And at that

493 Hit is not little ... bot lykker to righte: it is not a little matter ... but more a question of justice (**lykker** [more like] **to:** more in accord with)

494 I wolde I were of this world: I wish I were out of this world

495 if thee forthynk sore: if it sorely displeases you, i.e. if this matter so upsets you

501 'Then do not blame me in respect of my (hand-)work, (for the fact) that I wanted to rescue it'

503 of materes myn one: one [exclusively] from materials that were (also) of my own making

506 when it turned were: once it had converted, i.e. turned from sin and to the true God (cf. 518); the two senses of *turnen* – 'reform' and 'convert': *MED tornen* 17(a) and 18(b) – are here hard to distinguish

508 'So many are the sinful men that (now) repent in that place'

509–10 ‘And in that number there are moreover some such deranged fools as (are) ...’

511 **wale ne couthe**: could not tell

512 **That on** [one] ... **that other**: *That* is the old neuter form of the definite article ‘*the*’, still used before ‘*one*’ and ‘*other*’ [second] (cf. 355)

513–15 ‘Between the side (of a ladder) and the step cannot distinguish, nor what rule mysteriously divides the right hand from the left, even if his life depended on it’; these lines appear to represent cancelled or displaced material that originally followed 509

517 ‘That cannot sin under any provocation to their own spiritual harm’

520 **were harne lumpen**: harm would have befallen, i.e. people would have got hurt

521 **Couthe I not thole bot as thou**: if I could suffer only as you can

523 **For malyce is noght to mayntyne**: for fierceness is not to be exercised; *for the construction*, see footgloss to G 356 and cf. Pa 223

526 **to rakel**: too rash

528–9 The logic is that of political expediency (**enpresses**: oppresses, exercises compulsive force; **saghttel**: make terms, agree to a peace treaty)

- 1 See e.g. notes to [299–300](#), [372](#), [491](#).
- 2 These are listed by Robbins 1950: 258–9; see also Youngs 2008: 195.
- 3 In a footnote on [p. 17](#).

⁴ See pp. 186–7.

⁵ See further Benson 1961. Other versions of the beheading game are discussed by Elisabeth Brewer 1992, who also surveys analogues for the other plot (243–55).

6 See n. to 1190.

7 Cf. Mann 2009.

⁸ See n. to [1581–4](#).

⁹ See Putter 1996.

¹⁰ See e.g. First Continuation I.2546–8, *Lancelot do Lac* 478.

¹¹ Cf. Chaucer's reference to 'Gawayn, with his olde curteisye' at *CT* V.95.

12 Cf. Hanna 1983.

13 Cf. Schmidt 1987.

14 See Vale 1982.

1–6 **Sithen ... sithen**: after ... then: ‘After the siege and the assault at Troy had ceased ... it was Aeneas who then’

2 ‘(And) the city (had been) smashed to pieces and burnt to bits of charred wood and ashes’

3–4 ‘(And after) the man who wrought there the **trammes** [contrivances, schemes] of treason was **tried** [ascertained, exposed] for his treachery, which was the truest (i.e. veriest) in the world’; the reference is to Antenor (the Trojan who collaborated with the Greeks), well known as ‘traitour to the town of Troye’ (*Troilus* IV.204–5)

5 **Hit**: it **athel**: noble **highe kynde**: great kindred/progeny

6 ‘Who then subjugated nations and became the masters ... ’

7 **Wel negh**: well nigh, almost **wele**: wealth **west iles**: western realms

8 **Fro**: from the time that, when **riche**: great **to Rome riches**

him: directs his course to (what was to be) Rome

9 **bobaunce**: splendour, pomp **burgh**: city **bigges** [builds] **upon firste**: founds

10 **nevenes** [names] **hit his owne name**: gives it his own name **hit**: it **hatte**: is called

- 11 **Ticius to Tuskan**: Ticius (goes to) Tuscany; *idiomatic omission of verb of motion* **teldes**:dwelling places **begines**: begins, starts upon
- 12 **lyftes up**: raises, erects
- 13 **fer**: far **French flod**: i.e. the English Channel
- 14 **bonkes ful brode**: extensive banks **settes**: sets, founds
- 15 **With wyne**: ‘with joy’, pleasingly, to happy effect
- 16 **werre**:war **wrake**: destruction **wonder**: dramatically awful event
- 17 **By sythes**:at (various) times **wont**: dwelt, taken place **thereinne**: therein, in that place
- 18 **blisse**: joy **blunder**: trouble, disturbance
- 19 **skete**:swiftly, unpredictably **skyfted**:shifted, interchanged **synne**: since that time
- 20 **bigged**: built, founded **burn**: man **riche**: great
- 21 **Bolde** (*adj for n*) **bredden**: bold men were bred, i.e. multiplied
- baret**: battle, strife **lofdn**:loved; **-en marks plural person**
- 22 ‘Who wrought trouble over many revolving years’
- 23 **Mo** is the form of *more* used when the sense is ‘numerically more’
- ferlyes**: wonders, marvels **folde**: land **fallen**: befallen
- 24 **Then**: than **wot**: know (of) **syn that ilk tyme**: since that same time
- 25 **bult**: built, made their homes
- 26 **hendest**: most courteous, most civilized

27, 29 **aunter, aventure**: chance event, incident (generally of a dramatic and storyworthy kind)

27–8 **in erde** [(which happened) on earth] and **in sight** [visible, manifest] are tags, here functioning as vague assertions of actuality

attle: intend **schewe**: show, make known **That**: which **selly**: wonder, marvel **hit** [it] *is a recapitulatory pronoun* **holden**: hold, consider

29 **outrage**: egregious, prodigious **of Arthures wonderes**: among the wonders of Arthur's reign

30 **lysten this laye**: listen to this lay [tale in verse] **bot on [one] little while**: for but a short time

31 **as tite**: right away, promptly **in toun** [among the dwellings of men] indicates a public recitation

33–6 'In the form in which it (the **aventure**) is set and embedded in record firm and solid, soundly enclosed in trustworthy words, and as it has existed in the land from long back'; **stori** [story, history] covered any authoritative and inherited narrative record of past events

37 **lay**: was in residence

38 **mony luflyche lord**: many a fine lord **ledes of the beste**: men of the highest order

39 **Rekenly**: worthily, in fine fashion **tho rich**: those great, fine **brether** (*mutated pl*): brethren

40 **rich revel aryght**: really splendid festivity **rechlesse mirthes**: uninhibited gaieties

41 **tournayed tulkes**: men took part in tournaments

42 **Justed:** jousted **jolily:** with a will, keenly **gentyle:** noble, courtly (*tournaments* were group combats between opposing parties; a *joust* was an encounter between two mounted knights tilting with spears at one another in single combat – inside or outside a formal tournament)

43 **Sithen:** then **kayred:** went, made their way **caroles to make:** to perform song dances; a ‘carol’ was a ring dance for which the musical accompaniment was provided by a song

44 **ilyche** [alike] **ful:** kept up as a full or plenary one

45 **mete:** means ‘food’ (not ‘meat’, for which the term was ‘flesh’)

mirthe: pleasure, revelry **that men couth avise:** that could be devised

46 **glam:** noise, cries **gle:** music **here:** hear

47 **Dere:** pleasing, fine **dyn:** sound **daunsyng:** dancing

48 **hap upon high:** good fortune to a high degree (‘halls’ were the large communal rooms and ‘chambers’ smaller and more private apartments: cf. 831–3)

49 **With:** among **as levest hem thoghte:** ‘as dearest to them seemed’, each doing what s/he found most enjoyable

50 **wele:** well-being **woned:** dwelled **samen:** together

51 **kyd:** known, renowned **under Crystes selven:** i.e. under the heavens, in the world

53 ‘And he who presides over the court the fairest of kings’

54 **in her** [their] **first age:** i.e. in the flush of youth, in the prime of their lives

55 **On sille:** upon the paved floor (a tag for ‘in hall’)

56 **hapnest:** most blessed with good *hap*, possessed to the fullest degree of all the blessings of life **under heven:** beneath the skies, on earth

57 'Their king a man of the highest mettle'

58 **Hit were** (*subj*): it would be **nye**: trouble, difficulty **neven**: name, identify

59 **here**: army, band of fighting men **hille** has here its military sense 'raised site for (castle) headquarters'

60 'While the new year was (still) so fresh as to be newly arrived', i.e. it is New Year's Day

61 **double**: with twice as many dishes **dese**: dais, the high table (at the head of the side tables) **douth**: retinue, followers, company

62 **Fro**: From the time that, once

63 'The singing (of Mass) in the chapel having come to an end'

64 **cast of**: raised by **clerkes and other**: clerics and non-clerics

65 **nayted onewe**: uttered anew, cried out once again **nevened**: named, rehearsed

66 **sithen**: then **riche** (*adj for n*): great ones, i.e. the members of the court **runnen** (*pa pl*): ran **reche**: give, proffer **hanselle**: handsel [hand gift], something given, especially at New Year, as a token of good luck

67 **Yeyed**: called out **on high**: loudly **yelde hem**: yielded them, handed them over

68–70 Since there are losers and winners, the New Year's gifts are obviously the focus of some game

68 **Debated busily aboute**: disputed eagerly over

70 **wan**: won **wroth**: angry, displeased **ye**: you; *plural form of the second-person pronoun (the singular is 'thou')* **trowe**: believe

71 **mirth**: joy, pleasure **to**: until **mete tyme**: mealtime (about noon)

- 72 **worthily**: according to proper form; the washing of hands, from basins and ewers provided, was a pre-feast ritual **sete**: seat(s), benches
- 73 'The best man always higher up (the table), as was best becoming'; the diners are seated in order of precedence down the side tables
- 74 **gay**: beautifully, splendidly **graythed** arranged, set **in the myddes**: i.e. at the centre of the dais at which the host(s) and chief guests sat and which was set crossways at the head of the side tables
- 75 **Dressed**: placed, set **dere**: great, prestigious **dubbed** [adorned] **all aboute**: in a decorative setting
- 76 '(Curtains of) fine silken fabric on either side, a canopy over her'
- 77 **tried**: choice, excellent **tolouse**, **tars**: fabrics named after Toulouse and Tharsia (a region in Asia) **tapites**: heavy figured cloths (used for wall-hangings and carpets) forming the drapery of the **selure** (76)
- inoghe**: many
- 78 **beten**: inlaid
- 79 'Which could be shown by professional assessment to be of high value in monetary terms'
- 80 **In day**: any day, ever
- 82 **glent**: glanced (grey **iye**n [eyes] were a regular attribute of female beauty: cf. *Pe* 254 and n.)
- 83 **sye**: saw
- 86 **joly**: active, full of beans **of his joyfnes**: in his *jeunesse*, from the fact of his youth
- 87 **liked him lyght**: pleased him (when it was) active (i.e. he liked to be in motion)

- 88 **Other ... or:** either ... or **longe lye:** lie long in bed, i.e. get up late
- 89 **wylde:** wayward, mercurial
- 90 **maner:** habit, custom **meved him:** motivated him (in declining to be seated at table)
- 91 **nomen:** taken (up)
- 92 **dere day:** special day, major feast day **ere him devised were** (*subj*): before there should have been recounted to him
- 93 **aventurus thing:** matter associated with chivalric *aventure* (cf. 27, 29) **an uncouth** [unknown] **tale:** i.e. matter not already well known
- 94 **that he myght trowe** [believe]: i.e. which he could assume to be factual; **tale** [report, account: 93] did not necessarily imply 'fiction'
- 95 **alderes:** elders, leaders
- 96 **Other:** or **segge:** man **siker:** trusty, doughty
- 97–9 'To encounter him in a joust, (that) **Lede** [man] to put in jeopardy a life for (i.e. staked against) a life, each one to **leve** [allow] the other, according to how fortune would **fylsen** [assist] them, to have **the fayrer** (i.e. the upper hand)' (before taking his seat, Arthur wants either a **tale** (93) of marvel and adventure or a request to him from someone for a joust with one of his knights)
- 100 **countenaunce:** mode of behaviour **where he in court were** (*subj*): wherever he might hold court
- 101 **uch farande** [grand] **fest:** i.e. on each major holiday **fre:** noble, fine **meyny:** retinue, body of followers
- 103 **fere:** hale, healthy

104 stightles stif in stalle [position]: remains firmly where he stands

105 yep: fresh, lusty

106 mas is a northern contracted form of 'makes'

107 standes in stalle: remains standing in (his) place **stif:** strong, stalwart

108 'Making elegant small talk in front of the dais'; **-ande marks** present participle in northern dialects

109–15 The 'Round Table' does not in this poem provide a structure for formal meals, seating at which follows the normal fashions of the period: the guests are placed in order of precedence down **side-bordes** [side tables: **73, 115**], which are crossed at the head by a **highe table** (**108**), a **dese** [dais: **114**], at which the hosts and guests of honour are placed (cf. 74–5, C 114–17) – here, the king and queen, flanked on Guinevere's side by the king's nephews (Gawain and Agravain) and on Arthur's by the highest-ranking cleric and Yvain

109 There: where (i.e. at the dais) **good:** a sobriquet of Gawain's

110 'And Agravain (Gawain's brother) of the Hard Hand sits on his (Gawain's) other side'

111 kynges sistersunes [sister's sons]: nephews to the king **siker:** trusty, doughty

112 above: at the top **begines the table:** is placed to the right of the host's seat

113 ete with himselven: ate with him, i.e. was his mess-mate; guests were served in pairs (cf. 128), here Arthur and Guinevere, Gawain and Agravain, Baldwin and Yvain

114 dight: set **derworthly:** honourably

115 mony siker segge: many a trusty man **side-bordes:** side tables

116 com: came

117 **thereby**: i.e. from the **trumpes** (116)

118 **Newe nakryne** [of the kettledrums: *gen pl*] **noyse**: contrasting sound from the kettledrums **noble**: excellent

119a **Wylde**: loud **werbles**: musical phrases **wight**: vigorous

119b–20 ‘wakened (such a) sound that many a heart **hef** [rose] most high (i.e. swelled) at their notes’

121 **driven**: come, arrive **dere metes**: choice foodstuffs

122 **Foysoun**: abundance, plenty **the fresch** (*adj for n*): fresh (as opposed to preserved or salted) meat (which was scarce in winter and so a luxury at this season) **fele**: many

123 ‘That (there was) trouble (i.e. it was difficult) to find the room before the diners ...’

124 **the sylveren**: the silver (vessels) **sere**: different, various **sewes**: stews, dishes of meat or fish in sauce

126–7 ‘Each man as he himself liked took without reluctance’, i.e. everyone helped himself freely to whatever he wanted

128 **Aye two**: i.e. each pair of mess-mates (see footgloss to 113)

130 **her**: their

131 **uch wye**: each man **wont**: lack **were** (*subj after wit*): was

132 ‘Another very different sound quickly approached’

133 ‘In order that the man (Arthur) might have leave to take sustenance’: a humorous indication that the pre-dinner marvel/challenge required by Arthur (91–9) is about to occur

134 unethe was ... not: scarcely was; *double negatives are normal in ME* **noyse:** i.e. of the music ushering in the first course (**116**) **sesed:** ceased

135 kyndely: duly, properly

136 hales: comes straight in; *switches from past tense to so-called historic present are common in alliterative verse* **awelich:** awesome, grim

mayster: a man of social consequence

137 'The very largest man in the world (in terms of how) tall (he was) in measurement'; 'one' + *superlative* = 'the -est' (not 'one of the -est'): cf. e.g. 2363

138 Fro the swyre [neck] **to the swange** [waist]: i.e. in torso **sware:** squarely built

139 lyndes: loins **lymmes:** legs

140 etayn: giant **I hope** [think] **that he were:** I should judge he could be

141 'But the biggest possible man I at any rate (i.e. whether or not an **etayn**) record him to be'

142 And that: i.e. and a man **meriest:** most handsome **muckel:** 'muchness', size

143 all: although **sturne:** formidably solid

144 Bot: yet **wombe:** stomach **smale:** slender

145 fetures: bodily parts **folwande:** following on, in accordance **in forme that he hade:** in the form (= scale) on which he was built; i.e. although his figure was large, it was well proportioned

146 clene: impeccably

147 hue: involves wordplay: it appears to echo **forme** (**145**) and have the sense 'physical form, outward appearance' (see *MED heu* 3(a)), as to which the audience assume they know the most striking feature (hugeness), only to discover that 'colour' (see *MED heu* 1 and 2) is more relevant to the **Forwonder** [great wonder] occasioned by the stranger's **forme**

- 148 **semblaunt**: external appearance **sene**: visibly
- 149 'He looked like a man who would be fierce in fight'; *omission of relative pronoun is common in ME*
- 150 **enker grene**: vivid green
- 151 **graythed**: set out, arranged **gome**: man **wedes**: clothes
- 152–3 **cote** [tunic, kirtle] and **mantyle** [sleeveless overgarment] formed the basic costume of both men and women (cf. 1831) **strayt**: close-fitting **streght**: tight **stek on**: clung to **mery**: beautiful **above**: on top (of the **cote**) **mensked**: graced, adorned
- 154 The **pane** is the fur trim that appears at the edges of the garment where the lining of skilfully (**apert**) trimmed fur (**pelure pured**) is visible **clene** richly elegant (cf. 158, 163 and pp. 87–8)
- 155 **and his hode bothe**: 'and his hood likewise'; i.e. the hood is faced in matching **blythe blaunner** [beautiful fur]
- 156 **laght fro**: removed from **lokkes**: hair
- 157 **Heme**: ?snug-fitting **wel-haled**: firmly drawn up
- 158 **spenned on**: stuck firmly to **sparlyr**: calf **under**: below, beneath
- 159 **bordes**: straps **barred**: provided with ornamental bars (of precious metal)
- 160 **scholes**: shoeless, without footwear **schankes**: legs **schalk**: man
- 161 **clene verdure**: pure (colour of) verdure/green
- 162 **barres**: ornamental bars (of precious metal) **other blythe stones**: other metalwork in the form of beautiful gems
- 163 **richely**: splendidly **rayled**: set out

164 upon silk werkes: set into silkwork (i.e. embroidery); the gems form part of embroidered designs

165 ‘To such a degree that it would be too hard to describe half the **trifles** [ornamental details]’

166 enbrawd: sewn in as ornament **above:** on the surface **flyes:** butterflies

167 ‘With splendid beadwork of green, gold amidst it everywhere’

168–72 The metal on the horse’s pectoral and rump harness (the **payttrure** [poitrel, breast collar or plate] and **cropure** [crupper]), the **molaynes** [metal pieces forming the bit] and the stirrup-irons are all stained or enamelled green; while the non-metal **arsouns** [up-tilted front and back parts of the saddle], together with the saddle flaps or **skyrtes**, are bestudded with green jewels

168 proude: fine, splendid

171 all after: quite in accord, following suit, i.e. continuing the colour motif **athel:** noble, fine

173 fole: horse **ferkes on:** goes on, rides **fyne of that ilke:** ‘exactly of the same’, matching (cf. 1930)

176 stif to strayn: difficult to hold in a controlling grip (of knees and hands)

177 brayden: (well-)fashioned **quik:** lively, restive

178 gome: man **gayn:** ready, i.e. responsive, obedient

179 gay: splendidly **gered:** arrayed, equipped

180 of his horse sute: matching that of his horse (**sute:**suite, correspondence)

- 181 **fannande**: fanning (outwards and downwards) **fax**: hair
umbefoldes: enfolds
- 182 **much**: large, great **busk**: bush
- 183 **highliche**: remarkable, impressive **of his hed reches**: extends from his head
- 184 **evesed**: trimmed **umbe-torne**: around
- 185 **thereunder**: underneath **halched**: enfolded, enclosed **wyse**: way, manner, fashion
- 186 **knighates capados**: garment (covering head, neck and shoulders) worn by a knight under head and neck armour (cf. 572–3) **closes his swyre**: encloses his neck
- 188 **cresped**: curled **cemmed**: combed
- 189 **Folden in with fildore**: interwoven with thread of gold
- 190 ‘One strand of hair always alternating with another of gold’
- 191 **toppyng**: crest, forelock **twynnen**: form a pair (n.) **of a sute**: in a matching style (cf. 180)
- 192–5 ‘And both bound with a bright green ribbon, studded with finest gems, running the length of the **dok** [bunch of hair], and then interwound into a cord, (secured by) a twirled knot at the top, attached to which brightly shining bells of pure gold rang’ **There** (195): where
- 196 **fole**: horse **folde**: ground, earth **freke**: man
- 197 **sale**: hall

198 **eye**: eye

199 **as layt so lyght**: as bright as lightning

200 **sye**: saw

201 **as**: as if

202 **dintes**: blows **drye**: endure, survive

203 **Whether**: however, yet; i.e. the impression of invincibility in combat (201–2) is despite the fact that the stranger is not accounted for battle **hauberghe**: hauberk, metal corslet

204 **pysan**: metal collar, armour for neck and upper breast **plate**: plate armour **pented to**: pertained to

205 **schaft**: shaft, spear **schowve**: thrust **smyte**: smite, pierce

206 **on**:one **holyn bobbe**: spray of holly

207 ‘Which forms one of the greenest things to be seen when groves are bare (i.e. in winter)’; a branch in the hand indicated a peaceful mission (see 265–6)

208 **unmete**: beyond the ordinary (size), massive

209 ‘A grim sparth [battleaxe] to describe in words, if anyone could’

210 ‘The (axe-)head had the full length of an ell-rod [a stick for measuring out an ell, about 45in/115cm]’

211 **grayn**: projection (presumably the socket or casing, holding the axe-head)

212 **bitte**: blade **with a brod egge**: with a long cutting edge

213 **schapen to schere**: designed/adapted to cut

214 'By the **stele** [shaft] of a sturdy staff the strong (man) gripped it'

215 'That was strengthened with iron bands along the full length of the staff'

216 **bigraven**: engraved about, etched **werkes**: designs

217 **lace lapped**: cord (having been) twined **louked**: was fastened

218 **after the halme**: along the length of the shaft/handle **halched**: entwined

219 **tried**: choice, fine **thereto tached inoghe**: attached in plenty to it (= the lace)

220 **brayden ful riche**: fashioned very splendidly

221 **hathel**: man **heldes him in**: makes his way in; *verbs of motion are often reflexive in ME*

222 **Drivande**: directing his course **dut**: 'doubted', feared **wothe**: danger, harm

223 **Haylsed**: hailed, greeted **high he overloked**: he looked high over their heads

224 **warp**: cast, uttered

225 **gyng**: troop, household

226 **segge**: man

227 **Resoun**: words

228 **iye**: eye

229 **reled hem**: rolled them (= his eyes); i.e. he swept his eyes up and down the rows of diners (to see if he can identify the **governour** (225): Arthur is not in his seat at the head of the table)

230 **stemmed**: pondered **con studie** (*periphrastic past tense*): did seek to know, tried to work out
 231 **walt**: wielded, i.e. possessed **renoun**: status
 232 **lokyng on lenthe**: prolonged looking **lede**: man
 233 **uch**: each **hit**: it
 234 **hathel**: man **lache**: take, come by
 235 **As grow**: as to be **grener**: i.e. even greener (than grass)
 236 'Glowing brighter than green enamel set over gold'
 237 **All ... that there stod**: i.e. the serving attendants; the knights (whose reaction is dealt with at 241–2) are all seated at table **studied**: wondered perplexedly **stalked him nerre**: stole nearer to him
 238 **what he work schulde**: as to what he would do
 239 **fele sellyes**: many marvels **bot such never ere**: but such a one never before
 240 **Forthy**: for that reason **fayrye**: magic **demed**: judged, took
 241 **arwe**: afraid **mony athel freke**: many a noble man
 242 **stouned**: were stunned, responded with astonishment **steven**: voice, words **stone-stille seten**: sat as **stille** [without sound or movement] as stone
 243 **swoghe**: swoon- or trance-like **sale riche**: splendid hall
 244 **As**: as if **slaked**: died away **her lotes**: their words
 245 **In hye**: in haste, at once
 246–7 'I judge that it (= the silence) was not entirely out of **doute** [fear], but **sum** [partly] out of propriety (which would forbid them answering for the **governour** (225) explicitly asked for)'

- 248 **let**: they let **loute**: bow to
- 249 **Cast**: cast words, speak
- 250 **before the high dese** is where Arthur is at present standing (see 107–8)
- 251 **rekenly**: with propriety, courteously **reverenced**: greeted respectfully **rad**: frightened, alarmed
- 252 **Wye** [man] is a cautious form of address: since the stranger is unarmoured, his status (as a knight) is unclear **iwysse**: indeed
- 253 Arthur is replying to the question at 224–5 **hostel**: place of accommodation, residence **hatte**: am called
- 254 **Lyght**: alight, dismount **leng**: linger, stay
- 255 ‘And what your will is we shall find out later’
- 256 **as help me ... He that on high sittes**: i.e. so help me God
- 257 Wordplay on verb **wone** [dwell, remain] and noun **won** [dwelling, residence] **ernde**: errand, purpose in coming
- 258 **Bot for**: but (I have come) because **los**: fame **lede**: man
- 259 **burgh**: fortified dwelling, castle **burnes**: men
- 260 **Stifest**: strongest **stele-gere**: steel trappings, armour
- 261 **wyghtest**: most vigorous, doughtiest **of the worldes kynde**: i.e. of earthly beings
- 262 ‘Doughty to be engaged in play with in other goodly sports’; i.e. they make equally good opponents in courtly sports and games (cf. 283–4) as in battle

263 **kyd**: shown **herde carpe**: heard tell

264 **wayned**: brought **hider**: hither, to this place **iwyssse**: indeed

265–6 See footgloss to 207 **siker**: certain, sure **as in pese**: peaceably
plyt: harm, strife

267 **had I founded**: if I had travelled **in fere**: in (an armed) company,
i.e. at the head of an army

268 **hauberghe**: hauberk, metal corslet

270 **welde**: wield, use

271 **for**: because **wolde no werre**: wanted no war/combat

272 **be** (*subj after if*): are **burnes**: men

275 **con answare**: answered (cf. 230)

277 **crave**: request **bare**: unarmed; unarmed **batayl** is Arthur's
deduction from the contradictory implications of the visitor's stress on
the fighting qualities of its knights which have brought him to the
court (259–61) and on the fact that he is not accoutred (268–71) for
chivalric combat

278 **fayles thou not to**: you won't lack an opportunity to; *present with
future sense*

279 **frayste**: seek

280 **Hit** [it] **are**: there are **bot** only **berdlesse**: beardless **childer**:
children, adolescents

281 **hasped**: fastened, buckled
 282 **mach**: be matched against, oppose
 283 **Forthy**: therefore **crave**: request
 284 **Yol**: Yuletide **yep**: vigorous (i.e. 'game') young men
 286 **Be** (*subj after If*: cf. 291): is **brayn**: furious, berserk
 286–7 **so bold ... That dar** (*subj*): so bold ... that he would dare
 287 **a**: one **for**: in exchange for
 288 **giserne**: battleaxe
 289 **hondel**: wield **as him likes**: as it pleases him
 290 **bide**: take, stand **bur**: onrush, forceful blow **bare**: unarmed (cf. 277)
 291 **to fonde that I telle**: as to test what I say
 292 **Lepe** (*subj*): let him leap **me to**: to me; *post-positioned preposition, as often with ME pronouns* **lache** (*subj*): (let him) take
 293 **quit-clayme hit**: renounce all legal claim to it **kepe** (*subj*): let him keep
 294 **stande him a stroke**: take one blow from him **flete**: floor
 295 **Elles**: provided that **dight me the dome**: 'assign to me the ruling', grant me the right
 296 **Barlay**: ?by law
 297 **respite**: postponement, deferral
 298 'A year (**twelmonyth**) and a day' means 'A year to the day'; i.e. the return blow is to take place on the following New Year's Day (cf. 453)

299 **hye**: make haste **let see tite**: let it be seen quickly
 300 **Dar** (*subj*) **any**:if anyone dare; *inversion of subject and verb signals a conditional* **hereinne**: in this matter **oght**: aught, anything
 301 **hem**: them **stouned**: stunned, astonished **stiller**: with less motion and sound, even more paralysed and speechless
 302 **heredmen**: members of the household
 303 **renk**: man **rounce**: rouncy, horse **him riched**: turned himself
 304 **runischly**: fiercely **iyen**: eyes **reled**: rolled, cast
 305 **Bende his ... browes**: frowned **bresed**: bristled, bushy
blykkande: gleaming
 306 **Wayved**:moved to and fro **wayte**: watch, see
 307 **kepe him with carp**: meet his challenge with speech, i.e. say anything in reply **coghed**: gave an exclamation
 308 **rimed him**: expanded his chest **richly**: in an impressive manner
ryght him: sat upright
 310 **That all the rous** [glorification, praise] **rennes of**: of which all the renown runs
 311 **your** is second-person plural (*i.e. the address is to all the assembled knights*) **sorquydrye**: pride, sense of superiority
 312 **gryndellayk**: fierceness **greme**: (formidable) wrath **grete wordes**: threatening words
 313 **revel**: aggressive pride
 314 **Overwalt**: overthrown **a**: a single **on wyes**: one man's
 315 **all dares**: everyone cowers **dint**: blow

- 316 **greved**: took offence, became angry
317 **schame**: i.e. indignation at imputed shame **schyre**: bright, fresh, clear
318 **lere**: face, cheeks
319 **wex**: waxed, grew
320 'As did all who were there'
321 **kene**: brave **kynde**: nature
322 **nere**: near (to)
323 **nice**: foolish, nonsensical
324 'And as you have sought folly, find (it) you must' (n.)
325 **gast**: afraid **grete wordes**: threats (cf. 312)
326 **giserne**: battleaxe **upon Godes halve**: on God's behalf, in God's name
327 'And I shall grant the favour that you have asked'
328 **laght at his hande**: received (the axe) from his hand
329 **fersly**: haughtily
330 **halme**: shaft
331 **sturnely stures**: stoutly swings **that ... thoghte**: (he) who intended to strike with it; i.e. Arthur is giving the axe some preparatory swings
332 **him before**: in front of him
333 **Herre** [higher] **then**: taller than
334 **sturne chere**: undaunted expression **there**: where

335 countenance: mien, demeanour **drye:** unmoved, impassive
cote: tunic (see 152)

336 mate: distracted, discomposed **dismayd:** unnerved **for his mayn dintes:** at the mighty blows (Arthur was practising)

337 Then any burn: than (he would have been if) any man

338 Of wyne: some wine; 'of' + noun = *an unspecified quantity of*

340 con enclyne: bowed

341 with sawes sene: in clear words, expressly

342 melly: mêlée, combat **mot:** may

343 Wolde ye: if you would (cf. 300) **ye** *is the plural used as respectful pronoun of address; contrast thou at e.g. 324* **worthilyche:** worthy, excellent **Wawan:** *a variant form of Gawan*

344 bow: go, move

345 That: so that **vilany:** indecorum, discourtesy; 'villainy' [manners becoming a *vilain* or churl] was the opposite of 'courtesy' **voyde:** leave, quit

346 'And if it did not displease my sovereign mistress'; **that** *could be used to introduce a clause parallel with a preceding one – here a conditional clause parallel with 343*

347 before: in the presence of **riche:** noble, great

348 me think hit not: it does not seem to me **soth** [truth] **knownen:** known for a fact, i.e. widely acknowledged

349 There: where **hevened:** raised, put forth **high:** loudly, i.e. publicly

350 talenttyf: eager, i.e. more than willing

351 **yow aboute**: around you

352 **That** *should be construed with so bold* (351) **under heven**: in the world I **hope**: I think **none hawerer of wille**: (there are) none finer in will (i.e. higher-spirited, more courageous: cf. 57)

353 'Nor (are there) any better men on the field where combat is raised'

354 **wakkest**: weakest

355 'And my life (would be) the least **lur** [loss], whoever seeks the truth (i.e. if anyone wants to know the truth)'

356 'Only insomuch as you are my **em** [uncle] am I to be valued'; 'to' + infinitive, preceded by part of the verb 'to be', generally had passive sense

357 **bounte**: excellence, worth **your blod**: i.e. blood relationship with you **body**: person, self

358 **sithen**: since **note**: business, affair **nice**: foolish, silly (cf.

323) **falles**: properly pertains to

359 **frayned hit at yow**: sought it from you **foldes** (*imp*): hand over, give

360 **carp**:speak **comlyly**: in a fitting way **riche**: dispose, arrange (the matter)

361 **Bout blame**: without reproach

362 **Riche**: noble men **con roun**: conferred; **roun**, whose range of meaning included 'whisper', implies confidential discourse

363 **sithen**: then **redde**n: advised **all same**: all together, unanimously

364 **ryd**: extricate

366 **for to** + *infinitive* was a metrical alternative for 'to' + *infinitive* (see p. xxv)

367 **radly**: promptly, readily **riched him fayre**: made his way calmly

369 **he luflyly hit him laft**: he (Arthur) amicably relinquished it to him **lyfte up his hande**: raised his hand (to make the sign of the cross as a gesture of blessing)

372 **Kepe thee ... that thou on [one]kyrf sette**: make sure that you do deliver one cut (i.e. don't fail to make a cut with the one stroke allowed you (294) by the rules of the game) **cosyn**: kinsman

373 **redes him right**: (ironic) give him what he asks for (cf. C 1346)

374 **bide the bur**: endure the blow (cf. 290) **bede**: proffer

376 **baldly**: northern form of 'boldly' **him bides**: stands ready for him **bayst** (*aphetic form of 'abashed'*): was disconcerted **never the helder**: never the more (for that)

378 'Let us rehearse the terms of our agreement before we go any further'

379 **ethe**: adjure **thou hattes**: you are named

380 **telle** (*subj*): should tell **as**: in such a way that, so that **tryst**: trust

381–2 **I ... That**: I ... who **hatte**: am called **bede**: offer **buffet**: blow

383 **at thee**: from you **an other**: i.e. a return **buffet** (cf. 295)

384 **what weppen so**: whatever weapon **with no wye elles**: from no other man

- 385 **On lyve**: in life, alive; *'lif'* occurs as dative **lyve** after prepositions
- 386 **agayn**: in response
- 387–8 **so mot I thryve As**: so may I prosper as, i.e. it is true that (a common asseveration) **ferly**: wondrously, very
- 389 'That it is you who are to deliver this blow'
- 390 **Gog**: God **me likes**: it pleases me
- 391 **fonge**: receive, take **fyste**: hand **that**: that which, what **frayst**: sought, requested
- 392 **resoun**: speech
- 393 **Clanly**: fully
- 394 **siker**: assure, promise **trauthe**: troth, pledged word
- 395 **whereso thou hopes**: at whatever place you think
- 396 **upon folde**: on the earth **fech thee**: get for yourself
- 397 **before**: in the presence of **douth**: household troops, court **riche**: noble, great
- 398 **wale**: choose, pick out, i.e. find
- 399 **wot never**: have no idea **thou wones**: you dwell
- 401 **tech me truly thereto**: tell me truly the way to it **how thou hattes**: how you are named
- 402 **ware**: spend, use **wynne me**: get myself, win my way

403 **siker**: sure, veritable

404 **That is inogh in New Yere**: that (Gawain's provisional oath) will do for the beginning of the year (i.e. for the present) **hit nedes** (*impers v*): there is needed

405 **hende**: courteous, gracious

407 'And when you have fairly struck me, if I inform you clearly'

409 **frayste my fare**: find my whereabouts, seek me out **forwardes**

holde: keep the terms of the agreement

410 **spedes thou the better**: you will prosper the better, i.e. so much the better for you

411 **leng**: remain **layte**: seek **ferre**: further

412 **slokes** (*imp*): 'slake', i.e. enough!

413 **Ta** (*imp*): *northern contraction of 'take'* **tole**: blade, weapon (cf. 2260, C 1108, 1342)

414 **let se**: let it be seen (cf. 299) **thou cnokes**: you strike (cf. 2379)

415 **for sothe**: in truth, indeed

417 **upon grounde graythly him dresses**: puts himself in a suitable position (to receive the blow) on the floor

418 **lut with**: bowed **lyre**: flesh (i.e. of the neck) **discoveres**: uncovers

420 **note**: affair, business in hand (i.e. the decapitation)

- 422 **kay**: left **folde**: ground **before** (*adv*): in front
423 **hit**: it (the axe) **lyghtly**: with ease **lyght**: alight, descend **the naked** (*adj for n*): the exposed (flesh)
424 'So that the sharp (blade) split the bones of the **schalk** [man]'
425 **schränk**: sank **gres**: 'grease', flesh **schede hit**: severed it
426 **That**: so that **bitte**: 'bite', cutting edge **broun**: bright **bote on**: bit into, lodged in
427 **halse**: neck **hit**: fell
428 **That**: so that, in such a way that **fele**: many **foyned**: thrust off, shoved **her**: their **there**: where
429 **brayd**: spurted **that**: (the blood) which **blykked**: shone
430 **faltered**: wobbled **never the helder**: none the more (for that) (cf. 376)
431 **stythly**: firmly **start**: started, sprang; *verbs ending -t or -d often have contracted past tenses* **stif schankes**: firm legs
432 **runischly**: roughly, sternly (see n. to 304) **raght out**: reached out **thereas**: where
433 **Laght to**: took hold of **lyft**: lifted (cf. **start** at 431) **sone**: promptly
434 **blonk**: horse, steed
435 **stele-bawe**: 'steel-bow', stirrup
437 **sadly**: sedately, composedly
438 **As non unhap** [mischance] **had him ayled**: as if there was nothing the matter with him

439 **In stedde**: in the place, there
 440 **brayd his bluk aboute**: turned his trunk around (towards the dais: see 445)
 441 **ugly** [gruesome, eerie] was more sinister in sense than it is today
 442 **doute**: fear
 443 'By the time that his words were said'
 444 **up even**: right up
 445 **derrest**: greatest, i.e. the highest-ranking (who are seated at the dese: 109–14) **dresses**: directs, points
 446 **lyft**: lifted **loked ful brode**: opened its eyes wide; **brode** has the idiomatic sense 'with eyes wide open'
 447 **meled**: spoke **thus much ... as**: to such effect ... as
 448 **grayth**: ready, willing **hettes**: hast promised
 449–50 **layte**: seek **also lelly ... As thou has hyght**: as faithfully as thou hast promised to do (see 402–3) **herande**: (in the) hearing (of); i.e. there were witnesses to the promise
 451 **chose** (*imp*): make your way, go **fette**: fetch, receive
 452 **dint**: blow **habbes**: have
 453 **yederly yolden**: promptly repaid
 455 'Therefore, if you seek, you'll never fail to find me'
 456 **recreaunt**: (a) foresworn, (b) turntail (n.) **thee behoves**: it behoves you, you will have to

- 457 **runische**: rough, decisive (cf. 432) **rout**: sharp pull, jerk
- 458 **Haled out**: went straight out
- 459 **That**: so (swiftly) that **fire of the flynt**: sparks from the hard stone (ground) **fole** (*uninflected gen*): horse's
- 460 **kyth**: (native) land, region
- 461 'Any more than they knew from whence he had come'
- 464 **grene** (*adj for n*): green (one)
- 465–6 'Yet it was **breved** [spoken of] among those men as **ful bare** [manifestly] a marvel'
- 467 **hende**: courtly, well-behaved
- 468 **highe**: loudly, i.e. so as to be publicly heard (cf. 349)
- 470 **today**: i.e. on a feast day such as this
- 471 **craft**: employment (of time), occupation, activity
- 472 **Laykyng**: playing, performance **enterludes** were dramatic representations, small plays or spectacles (often staged during feasts), to which Arthur likens the 'drama' that has just occurred
- 473 **these**: those **kynde**: natural, i.e. appropriate (to rank and season)
- caroles**: songs to which ring dances were performed (cf. 43)

- 474–5 **Neverthelesse**: i.e. what Arthur has characterized as a festive ‘interlude’ did nevertheless constitute the **selly** [marvel, wonder] it was his custom to wait for (91–4) **mete**: food **forsake**: make denial
- 476–7 **glent**: glanced **gaynly**: fittingly, appositely (by using to punning effect the idiomatic expression **heng up thyn axe**, which meant ‘Have done!’, ‘Leave off!’) **inogh hewen**: done enough hewing
- 478 **done**: put **doser**: cloth used as wall-hanging
- 479 **There**: where **for mervayl**: as a marvel
- 480 ‘And by its authentic validation recount the wondrous event’;
when an auxiliary introduces two infinitives, the second is often preceded by ‘to’: hence **myght ... loke** (479) ... **to telle** (480)
- 481 **borde**: table
- 482 **kene**: skilful, able
- 483 **double** (*adv*): in double portions (cf. 61) **as derrest** (*adv*) **myght falle** (cf. 890): as might most worthily befit (the occasion)
- 484 **mete**: food **mynstralsye**: music
- 485 **wele**: well-being, happiness **walt**: spent, passed **worthed**: (there) came about
- 486 **In londe**: in the land, there (a tag)
- 488 ‘That you do not **wonde** [draw back] because of **wothe** [danger]’ (cf. *Pe* 153–4, *C* 855)
- 489 **frayn**: try, i.e. undergo, see through
- 490 **tan on honde**: taken in hand, taken up

491 **hanselle ... of adventures**: earnest of adventures, downpayment
 on adventures; a **hanselle** (cf. 66) was a New Year's gift given as a
 token of good luck for the coming year **on firste**: at the outset
 492 **yong**: i.e. new **yelpyng**: talk of heroic deeds (see 91ff)
 493 **him** (*dat of 'thay' or 'he'*) **wordes were wane**: to them/him such
 words (as constitute **yelpyng**) were wanting/lacking
 494 **stoken of**: stuffed full of, packed with **sturne werk**: manly doings,
 tough business **stafful her hande**: their hands completely filled
 495 **gamnes**: games, sports
 496 **hevy** [joyless] is in contrast with **glad** (495)
 497 **ben** (*subj after thagh*): are **mayn**: strong
 498–9 **yernes**: runs by **yerne**: swiftly **yeldes never like**: never brings
 the same (i.e. brings with it change, in fortunes as in weather) **forme**
 (*positive of comparative 'former'*): first, beginning **fynisment**: finish,
 completion **foldes**: ?accords (these generalities relate to the year's
respite before the return blow: 297–8)
 500 **Yol**: Yuletide **overyede**: went by
 501 **uch**: each **serlepes**: separately, individually
 502 **com**: came **crabbede**: ill-natured, unfriendly **Lentoun**: Lent; the
 forty days before Easter during which meat was avoided
 503 **fraystes**: tests, subjects to purgative rigour **more symple**: even
 more humble, i.e. unappetizing

504 weder of the world: fine weather ordained by nature **hit** [it] is a recapitulative pronoun **threpes:** battles, contends

505 clenges adoun: shrinks downwards **up lyften:** i.e. lie less low in the sky and so cause less obscurity

507 flat: field, meadow **schewen:** come into view

508 groundes and the greves: fields and woodlands **her wedes:** their robes

509 busken to bylde: set themselves to construct homes **bremlyche:** vigorously, lustily

510 sues: ensues

511 By bonk: over the ground

512 bolne to blowe: swell to blow, swell into bloom

513 rawes: hedgerows **rich and ronk:** splendid and flourishing

514 notes: i.e. birdsong **noble inowe:** very fine

515 so wlonk: most splendid

516 'After that part of the summer when the winds are genial (i.e. after spring)'; **somer** here and at **510** refers to the whole of the warmer part of the year, and so includes spring; **wynter** (**522**, **530**) likewise refers to the whole of the colder half of the year, and thus includes what would be autumn in a four-season division

517 Zeferus: Zephyrus, the god, in classical mythology, of the west wind **syfles himself on:** blows (with a sibilant sound) himself into/upon **erbes:** plants

518 Welawynne: very joyful **wort:** plant **waxes thereoute:** grows out of them, i.e. from the **sedes and erbes** of **517**

- 519 **donkande**: bedewing, moistening **of**: from
- 520 **bide**: experience, receive **blusch**: look, glance
- 521 **hyes**: hastens, comes hurriedly **Hervest**: the time when ripe crops are harvested (i.e. August) **hardenes**: urges on **him** refers to the personified **wort** of 518
- 522 **for** [because of]: i.e. before **wynter** (here and at 530) refers to the whole of the colder half of the year and thus includes the approaching autumn
- 523 'He (the harvest month) drives up, by his dryness, the dust'; '*drive to*' + *infinitive* = *force to take a certain direction* (cf. 1047–8)
- 525 i.e. gusty winds bring with them more overcast skies (**of the welkyn**: in the sky; **wrasteles with**: contends fiercely against)
- 526 **lausen**: loosen, become unfastened **lynde**: 'lime-tree', poeticism for 'tree'
- 527 **grayes**: turns grey
- 528 'Then all which at first rose up reaches maturity and rots'
- 529 **yernes**: runs (by)
- 530 'And winter comes round again as the law of the world (i.e. nature) requires' (see footgloss to 522)
- 531 **No fage**: no deceit, in truth
- 532 **Meghelmasse mone**: the moon (or lunar cycle) of the month in which Michaelmas (29 September) falls
- 533 **wynter wage**: token of winter, sign of winter's imminent arrival; the autumn equinox – 22/23 September – marked the beginning of the **wynter** half of the year (see footgloss to 516)

535 anious: burdensome (by reason of winter and lack of directions as well as its purpose) **vyage:** journey

536 while: until **Alhalday:** All Saints' Day (1 November) **lenges:** stays, remains

537 'And he (Arthur) held a fare [feast] on that holy day for the man's sake (i.e. in Gawain's honour)' (cf. 997)

538 rich: splendid, magnificent

540 longing: grief, anxiety (especially for a loved one: cf. C 779, 1003)

541 never the lesse ne the later: none the less or the less readily **nevened bot mirthe:** spoke only joy, i.e. the conversation remained cheerful

542 that gentyl: that worthy one, that good man

543 after mete: when the meal was over **mournyng:** sorrow, regret **meles:** speaks **eme:** uncle (i.e. Arthur)

544 passage: journey **pertly:** openly, clearly; Gawain's imminent departure has not up to this point been explicitly mentioned by him or by anyone else

545 lege lord of my lif: lord to whom I owe allegiance and at whose disposal my life is **leve:** leave, permission to depart

546a cost: nature, quality

546b–47 'I do not care (to go) further to make to you a tale of woe about it, (it being) nothing but an insignificant matter' (**tenes:** distresses, troubles)

548 boun to: bound for, ready to depart for **bur:** blow **barely tomorne:** tomorrow morning itself

549 **gome**: man as **God wil me wysse**: i.e. as best I can; Gawain has been given no directions, and so has only God to **wysse** [guide] him to his destination

550 **bowed**: went, made their way

554 **bigge**: strong, sturdy

555 **menskful**: honoured/honourable (ones)

556 **com the kyng nerre**: drew nearer to the king

557 **her**: their

558 **derne**: hidden, unrevealed **doel**: dolour, distress **driven**: gone through, undergone **sale**: hall

559 **That**: for the fact that **wende**: go **ernde**: business, mission

560a **drye**: suffer, undergo **delful**: doleful, grievous **dint**: blow, stroke

560b–61 ‘use his sword no more (thereafter)’, i.e. engage no more in knightly combat

562 **made aye good chere**: assumed a consistently cheerful demeanour

563 **What**: why on earth **wonde**: draw back, turn aside

564 **destines derf and dere**: hard and pleasing lots

565 **fonde**: make trial of, i.e. undergo

566 **dresses**: rises (cf. 2009), not ‘puts on his clothes’

567 **armes**: armour

- 568 **tuly tapit**: red-silk cloth **tyght**: (was) spread **flete**: floor
569 **gilde**: overlaid with gold, gilded **gere**: armour
570 **the stele hondeles**: runs his hands over the (items made of) steel
571 **Dubbed**: arrayed **dere**: fine **tarse**: luxury fabric associated with Tharsia (cf. 77)
572 **crafty capados**: artful kind of short cape (cf. 186) **closed alofte**: i.e. ending in a drawn-up hood or coif
573 **bryght**: good to look at, fine **blaunner**: costly kind of fur **bounden** [set, sewn] **withinne**: i.e. lined
574 **sabatouns**: armour for upper part of foot **segge fotes**: man's feet
575 **lapped**: wrapped, enfolded **with**: by means of **greves**: greaves, armour for lower leg
576 **polaynes**: knee-pieces **piched thereto**: set upon them
577 **knaged with knottes**: fastened by clasps
578 **Queme quyssewes**: goodly cuisses [thigh-pieces] **coyntlyche closed**: neatly enclosed
579 **thik-throwen**: densely curving, i.e. solid, muscular **with thwonges to tached** (cf. 219): by means of thongs attached thereto (i.e. to the cuisses)
580 **brayden**: interwoven; the reference is to chain mail, formed by interlocking steel links or **rynges bruny**: coat of mail
581 **Umbe-weved**: 'be-wrapped', enfolded **wye**: man **upon wlonk stuffe** [*over luxurious padding*] *qualifies* **rynges** (580)
582 **brace**: arm-pieces

583 **cowters**: elbow-pieces **gay**: splendid, fine **gloves of plate**: i.e. gauntlets

584 **godlyche gere**: goodly armour **him gayn schulde**: would be of service to him

585 **That tyde**: at that time, on that occasion

586 **riche**: splendid **cote-armure**: coat of arms, i.e. surcoat worn over armour and displaying the knight's heraldic device

587 **spend with pryde**: fastened to impressive effect

588 **Gurde**: girt **bronde**: sword **sure**: trusty

589 'By means of (i.e. hanging from) a silk belt around his waist'; **side** [*sides*] is an old plural form used for rhyming purpose

591 **lest lachet over loupe**: smallest slot for a tie/cord **lemed**: shone

593 **Offred**: participated in the 'Offering', i.e. the section of the Mass in which the congregation processed to the **highe auter** [high altar] to make offerings **honoured**: worshipped, paid reverence to the Deity

594 **Sithen**: then **court feres**: fellow courtiers

595 **Laches**: takes **lovely**: cordially **at**: from

596 **conveyed** [escorted] is the word regularly used of the courteous attention of 'seeing off' a parting inmate or guest (cf. C 678) **bikende to Cryste**: committed to Christ, i.e. said goodbye

597 **By that**: by then **Gryngolet**: Gawain's horse **grayth**: ready, i.e. harnessed

598 **gayly**: brightly, splendidly **frenges**: borders, trimmings

599 Aywhere: everywhere, all over **naylet:** nailed, studded **for that note** [business, affair] **riched** [prepared]: i.e. refurbished specially for the occasion

600 barred aboute: (metal-)striped all over (cf. 159) **bounden:** set, trimmed

601 apparayl: style, fashion, i.e. colour scheme **payttrure:** poitrel (breast-harness) **proude skyrtes:** fine saddle-skirts

602 cropure: crupper, croup-strap (running under the tail and fastened to the back of the saddle) **covertor:** cloth, caparison **acorded with:** matched **arsounes:** uplifted front and back parts of saddle

603 ‘And all was splendid gold studs rayled [set out] on red’

604 glent: flashed, shone

605 hentes: seizes, takes hold of **hastily:** promptly

606 stifly: firmly **stuffed:** padded

607a was: i.e. stood

607b–608 ‘fastened at the back (to the **aventayle** [neck-armour]), with a soft fabric **uryoun** [decorative band] covering (the join with) the **aventayle**’

609 Enbrawden and bounden: sewn and set

610 borde: band **bryddes on semes:** birds in the stitches, i.e. stitched or embroidered birds

611 ‘Such as parrots depicted among periwinkle flowers’

612a Tortors: turtledoves **trulofes:** ‘trueloves’, quadrifoliate flowers now called ‘herb Paris’

612b–13 ‘so densely wrought as to suggest that many a **burde** [lady] had been seven years engaged on the work’; years were frequently calculated in terms of the number of ‘winters’ passed

- 614 **In toun** (a tag): in dwelling places, i.e. in the area
- 615 **cercle**: metal band encircling upper part of helmet **more of pris**: of greater value, i.e. even more luxurious than the **urysoun**
- 616 **umbe-clypped**: enclosed, surrounded
- 617 **devise**: pattern, design
- 618 **broun** when used of minerals meant 'shining' (cf. 426)
- 619 **schewed him**: brought him **goules** [gules] is the heraldic term for red
- 621 **bauderyk**: baldric, shoulder strap **about the halse** [neck]: i.e. over the shoulder (cf. 2484–6)
- 623 **apendes to**: is (as an armorial device) appropriate to
- 624 **I am in tente**: I am in purpose, it is my intention **tary ... me**: detain me, i.e. hold up the story
- 625 **syngne**: symbol, figure **sette sumwhyle**: once instituted
- 626 **trauthe**: good faith, integrity **by tytle that hit habbes**: (a signification) that it (the pentangle) has by **tytle** [just claim]
- 627 **holdes**: has
- 628 'And each line overlaps and interlocks with another'; the reference is to a pentagram, drawn with intersecting lines:

629–30 Englych hit callen Overal: the English most generally call it, i.e. the most common vernacular term for it is ... ('pentangle' being the learned Latin term: **664–5**) **here:** hear

631 Forthy: therefore **acordes:** is appropriate **clere armes:** shining armour

632 'For, being always fivefold **faythful** [possessed of good faith, "true"] in five ways each separate time'; **sythes** [times] here bears its multiplication sense: Gawain is '5 × 5 true' (the five categories and their fivefold subdivisions are specified in the next stanza)

633a for good known: known to be good (with allusion to Gawain's sobriquet 'good': cf. 109)

633b–34 'and as **Voyded** [free] of all baseness as refined gold, embellished with virtues ...'; the point is that, in a 'truth' that is organized in fives, and in his freedom from baseness, Gawain mirrors his device, the pure gold (620) pentangle

635 mote: castle, court

637 bere: bore **cote:** surcoat (see **586**), coat of arms

638 tulk: man **of tale most true:** i.e. truest to his word (cf. *Pe* 311)

639 lote: speech **gentyl** implied respect and sensitivity to others (see Glossary)

640 fyve wyttes: five senses

641 eft: again, likewise (these two sets of five in **640–41** concern the morally proper use of the physical faculties)

642–50 These two sets of five are devotional; the five wounds of Christ and the five joys of the Virgin – most commonly, the annunciation, nativity, resurrection and ascension, and Mary's own assumption into heaven – were popular themes of devotional literature

642 afyaunce: faith, trust **upon folde:** on earth

643 **caght**: received

644 **melly**: combat **stadde**: placed, set

645 'He kept it firmly in mind above all ... ' (**thro**: earnest, unwavering; **that** *correlates with That* in 646)

646 **forsnes**: strength **fong at**: took/received from

647 **hende heaven-quene**: gracious queen of heaven

648 **At this cause**: for that reason **comlyche**: in a comely fashion

649 **the inner half**: the inner part, i.e. the inside

650 **That**: so that **blusched**: looked, cast his eyes **belde**: boldness, doughtiness **payred**: suffered impairment, weakened

651 **used**: practised (this fifth set of five consists of the social virtues of *gentillesse*)

652 **fraunchis**: 'freeness', generous behaviour (the opposite of selfinterestedness) **felawschyp**: friendship **forbi all thinges**: above all, in particular

653 **clannesse**: chastity **courtaysye** (see Glossary) was the quality for which Gawain was especially famed outside the text – and within it (see 912–27) **croked were never**: never deviated

654 **passes**: surpasses **poyntes**: constituent parts, (often, as here, with reference to) personal attributes or qualities (cf. *Pa* 531) **pure**: excellent

655 **happed on**: fastened on (here and in the following lines Gawain's twenty-five-fold excellence is described in terms of the interlocking lines of the 'knot' of a pentagram: cf. 627–8) **then**: than

656 **all these fyve sythes** ['times' in the multiplication sense]: i.e. all the pentads listed in the foregoing lines **fettled**: set

657 halched in: enfolded, intertwined with **that non ende hade:** so that none of them had a loose or unconnected end (cf. 627–8)

658 fyched upon: fixed into shape by **poyntes** puns on the sense ‘constituent parts’ (i.e. the categories listed: wits, fingers, wounds, joys, *gentillesse*) and ‘points’ (i.e. of the pentangle: cf. 627) **faylede never:** stayed firm, remained true

659 samned: came together, merged **sundrede:** separated, came apart

660–661 ‘Without any **ende** [break, loose end] at any **noke** [corner, angle], so that no one could discern any point at all where the **game** [design, device] began or came to an end’

663 Ryally: royally, splendidly **red** was an epithet often used of gold, denoting a tint indicative of its purity **goules** [gules] is the heraldic term for red (cf. 619)

664–5 ‘Which (the ‘knot’ of 662) is called the **pure** [true, properly so called] pentangle by people with learning’, i.e. those who can read Latin – ‘pentangle’ being a word not current in the vernacular, in which the term ‘knot’ was used (see 629–30)

666 graythed: equipped, ready **gay:** richly, splendidly

667 laght: took hold of **launce:** lance **thore:** there

668 hem: them

669 wende: weened, thought

671 stif: forcibly **stonefire:** sparks arising when stone is struck (cf. 459)

672 **syked**: sighed

673 **sothly**: in truth, indeed **same**: together **segges til other**: men to one another

674 **Carande**: 'caring', i.e. anxious about **hit is scatthe**: it is a bad thing, it is a pity

675 **lost**: destroyed, wiped out (cf. C 909, Pa 198) **of lif noble**: noble in the conduct of your life

676 **fere**: companion, i.e. peer, equal **ethe**: easy

677 **Warloker**: with more awareness or foresight; **-loker** is a comparative-forming suffix **wroght**: acted **had ... bene**: would have been **wyt**: good strategy, wise course of action (see MED wit n 5)

678 **dight**: arranged for, caused **worthed**: become, i.e. been made

679 **lowande**: shining, i.e. illustrious **ledes** [men], in collocation with a word referring to a 'ruler', means 'subjects' **him wel semes**: it beseems him well to be, i.e. he is well qualified to be (cf. 848–9, where the same complimentary judgement is made by Gawain as is here made of him)

680 'And it would have been better for him to have been so than hacked to nothing'

681 **Hadet with**: beheaded by **alvisch** 'elvish', i.e. supernatural **for angardes pryde**: out of the pride that comes from arrogance

682–3 **such counsel to take As**: to take such counsel as comes from **in cavelouns on**: in cavilling arguments in the course of

684 **waltered**: rolled, streamed; usually used of sea and waves (cf. C 1027, Pa 142) **iyen**: eyes

685 **soght**: went **wones**: dwellings

687 **abode**: stay, delay

688 **wightly**: vigorously, quickly

690 'As I heard from **The boke**', i.e. the authoritative source the poet has claimed for the story (31–6)

691 **Logres**, the name of Arthur's realm in pre-'England' Britain, is a piece of historical colour

692 **on Godes halve**: on God's behalf, i.e. in a holy cause (that of truth) **him ... thoghte**: to him it seemed

693 **ledeles**: 'man-less', without attendants **lenges on nightes**: spends the night

694 **There**: where **fare**: food, entertainment

695 **ferre**: companion **fole**: horse **frithes**: wooded areas **downes**: exposed uplands, hills

696 **gate**: road, way **with to carpe**: to talk with

697 **neghed**: neared (Gawain's journey is probably imagined as having started from Caerleon, a city (in south-east Wales) traditionally associated with Arthur's court)

698 **Anglesay**: Anglesey is the largest of a triad of islands lying off north-west Wales **on lyft half he holdes**: he keeps to his left; i.e. he turns eastward to cross the north coast of Wales

699 **fordes**: water-crossings (along the north coast) **forlondes**: coastal headlands or promontories

700 '(And then crosses) over at the Holy Head, till he had the bank again (i.e. gained the opposite bank)'; Gawain here crosses the Dee estuary into Cheshire, the poet's home territory (see pp. x–xiii)

701a **wyldrenesse**: uninhabited and uncultivated terrain

701b–702 'There dwelled there but few who loved with good will either God or man'; the Wirral was a haunt of outlaws and marauders

703 **frayned**: enquired **ferde**: fared, went

706 **nikked him with nay**: replied to him with a 'no' (cf. 2471) **her**
their

709 **gates**: ways, paths **straunge**: obscure, not well known

710 **unbene**: 'unpleasing', i.e. not easy to traverse

711 '(And) often changed the direction of his gaze', i.e. he looked in
many directions

712 **sene**: see

713 **clyff**: hill **overclambe**: scaled **contrayes**: regions

714 **floten**: removed **fremedly**: as a stranger; *frend* and *fremed*
[stranger] were antonyms

715 **warthe other water there**: riverbank or body of water where;
fording places were, in chivalric romance, often patrolled by hostile
knights who had to be fought with before crossing could be made

716 **bot ferly hit were**: unless it were a wonder, i.e. regularly, as a
matter of course

717 **that¹**: i.e. the foe **him behoved**: it behoved him, he had to

718 **So many mervayl**: so many a horror; **mervayl** here has the
negative meaning the word **wonder** (cf. 16) could also have

719 **Hit were to tor**: it would be too difficult **the tenthe dole** [part]:
i.e. even a fraction (cf. *Pe* 136)

- 720–21 **Sumwhyle ... Sumwhyle**: at one time ... at another **wormes**: dragons **wodwos**: satyrs **knarres**: crags
- 722 **other while**: at another time
- 723 **etaynes**: giants **him anelede**: panted after him **of**: out of, from
- 724 **Nade** (= *ne hade*) **he ben**: had he not been **drye**: unmoved, i.e. resolute, stoical
- 725 **Douteles**: undoubtedly **dreped**: destroyed, slain
- 726 'For combat did not afflict him so much as to change the fact that winter was even worse'
- 727 **schadden**: shed, fell
- 728 **fres**:froze **fale**: faded (with respect to vegetation), i.e. no longer green, bare
- 729 **yrnes**: irons, pieces of armour
- 730 **then**: than **nakede**: bare
- 731 **Thereas**: where **crest**: summit **borne**: stream
- 732 **ikkle** [icicle] was usually, though not always, prefixed, as here, by 'ice'
- 733 **payne**: discomfort **plytes ful harde**: sore straits
- 734 **By countre**: outside secure and populous areas; **countre** here = 'land lying outside the walls of city or castle' (see *MED contre*(*e n* 4))
- 736 **tyde**: (liturgical) time, festival
- 737 **made his mone** [lament]: i.e. appealed

- 738 'That she should instruct him (where) to ride'
- 739 **wysse**: guide **wone**: dwelling
- 740 **By**: beside, near **morn**:i.e. of Christmas Eve (see 734) **meryly**: 'fairly', in due course
- 741 **ferly**: 'wondrously', extremely
- 742 **on uch a halve**: on each side, all round **holtwodes under**: forest-woods underneath
- 743 **hore**: grey, i.e. shade-creating, light-blocking **a hundred togeder**: clustered together by hundreds
- 744 **harled**: entwined **samen**: together
- 745 **rogh, raged mosse**: moss forming a shaggy covering, as of unkempt hair **rayled**: spread
- 748 **glydes hem under**: passes underneath them
- 749 **mony misy and myre**: many a bog and mire **all him one**: all on his own
- 750 **Carande** [caring] **for**: anxious about **costes**:qualities, i.e. observances, the proprieties to be observed (cf. 1483; and compare also 1295) **ne kever schulde**: should not manage
- 751 **servyce of that Syre**: (liturgical) service in honour of that Lord **self**: same
- 752 **burde**: (well-born) woman, lady **baret**: strife, (spiritual) affliction **quelle**: dispel
- 753 **sykyng**: sighing

755 herber: shelter, lodging **there:** where **highly:** nobly, with due dignity

755–6 The reference is to the first two services the laity were required to attend at Christmas: the midnight Mass (marking the passage into Christmas Day) and the immediately following service of Matins

757 thereto: to that end **prestly:** earnestly **Pater and Ave:** i.e. the prayers beginning *Pater Noster* [Our Father] and *Ave Maria* [Hail Mary]; these and the Creed (**758**) were the first prayers that children learned

760 cryed: cried out in sorrow, lamented **mysdede (pl):** transgressions, sins; Gawain's contrition substitutes for the formal confession which the pious would make in preparation for communion at Christmas Mass, but which, without a priest, he cannot make

761 sayned him: signed (i.e. crossed) himself **in sythes sere:** several times

762 Cros Cryst me spede: May Christ's cross prosper me; *subjunctive spede* [cause to succeed] was common in prayers: cf. 'God speed the plough'

763 'He had not crossed himself, the man, but (the ritual) three times'

764 won: dwelling, residence **mote:** moat

765 launde: open space, clearing **lawe:** rising, mound **loken:** enclosed **boghes:** boughs

766 borlyche: sturdy, imposing **bole:** tree-trunk **diches:** moat

767 aghte: had, owned

768 'Set on a meadow encircled by a covert/hunting ground' (**park:** enclosed area surrounding a castle or manor, often serving as a game preserve)

769 **'pyned** [impounded, enclosed] by a spiked palisade with posts set close together'

770 **umbe-teye**: went round, surrounded

771 **holde**: stronghold **on that on side**: to one side of him

avised: looked at, observed

772 **schyre**: bright, fair

773 **has ... of**: takes off **hendly**: politely, decorously **highly**: devoutly

774 **Saynt Gilyan** [Saint Julian the Hospitaller] was associated with the provision of hospitality to travellers **gentyl**: gracious, responsive

775 **courtaysye had him kyd**: had shown him courtesy **cry**: appeal, entreaty

776 **bone hostel**: good hostelry **yete**: to grant

777 **gederes ... to**: i.e. strikes **gilt heles**: gilt-spurred heels (see 587)

778 **ful chauncely**: quite by chance **chef gate**: main path, most direct route; **gate** [road, path] is distinct from **yate** [gate]

779 **bremly**: directly, at once

781 **breme up brayde**: firmly drawn up

782 **yates**: gates **stoken faste**: barred firmly

783 **arayed**: constructed

784 **Hit dut**: it (= the castle) 'doubted' (= feared)

785 **'The man, who paused on his blonk** [steed], remained on the bank'

786 **double**: extra wide **drof to**: adjoined, abutted on **place**: place of residence, mansion

787 **wod in**: went into, passed down into

788 **eft**: again, i.e. likewise **haled upon lofte**: rose upwards

789–90 **tables** were horizontal slabs (cf. *Pe* 994, 1004) marking the top of the wall, those **tables** being here **Enbaned** [made to project outward, to form a shelf or parapet], so that the **abataylment** [battlements] surmounting them likewise projects outward, a form of battlementation today termed ‘machicolation’ (cf. *C* 1459) **in the best lawe**: according to best practice

791 **sithen**: then, next (Gawain’s eye is moving upwards) **garytes**: defensive turrets, set into and rising higher than the battlemented wall

792 **loupe**: aperture, opening (for watching or shooting from) **louked ful clene**: formed a neatly enclosed space

793–4 **barbican**: outer or forward fortification; this fortified wall-gate is a structure distinct from the castle beyond it described at 794–802 (where Gawain’s eye, still travelling upwards, reaches all that is visible to him of that castle or **halle** (794): the elegantly towering spires, chimneys and pinnacles, seen rising up over and behind the wall) **blusched**: looked **innermore**: further in

795 **telded bitwene**: erected at intervals **troched ful thikke**: with many *troches* (= ?pinnacles)

796 **fylyoles**: pinnacles, steeples **fyed**: were joined (to them) **ferlyly**: wondrously

797 **corven coprounes**: ornamentally carved *cops* [surmounting tops] **craftyly sleye**: expertly skilful

798 **chese**: discerned **inoghe**: in plenty

799 **bastel-roves**: turret-roofs **that blenked**: which (i.e. the chimneys) shone

800 **powdered aywhere**: bestrewn everywhere

801 carneles: crenellations, battlements **clambred:** crowded **thikke:** densely (these battlements and turrets of **799** and **801** are not those of **790–91** (which belong to the **barbican** wall-gate), but those of the castle visible behind and above the **barbican**)

802 pared: cut **purely:** absolutely, veritably

803 fre freke: noble man **inoghe:** very

804 If: if only **kever:** manage **cloyster:** enclosure

805 herber: take lodging **halyday:** holy days, festival period

806 Avinaunt: agreeably, becomingly

808 pure plesaunt: truly complaisant

809 ‘From the wall he received his (Gawain’s) request’

810 ‘**And greeted the knight errant**’; **erraunt** (< French *errer* [go]) is a separate word from **er(a)nd(e)** [errand]: a knight errant is an itinerant knight, i.e. one on a journey or quest

811 go myn ernde: go on my business, take my message

812 high lord: master **crave:** ask, request

813 Ye, Peter: yes, by St Peter (who bore the keys of heaven) **purely I trowe:** I quite believe

814 ‘That you will be a man welcome to stay as long as it pleases you’; where Gawain used the informal **thou** to the porter (**811**), his social inferior, the porter uses the polite form **ye** to Gawain

815 yede him: went **yateward:** gatekeeper **com ayain swythe:** came back again quickly

816 folk: servants, attendants **frely:** nobly, courteously **fonge:** receive

817 **draght**: drawbridge **derely**: in noble manner **yede**: went

819 'To welcome this same man in what **hem thoghte** [to them seemed] a worthy manner'

820 'They yielded him (entrance via) the broad gate, (which was) set wide open'; the **brode yate** is a double gate (two gates set side by side and opening at the centre) at the inner end of the drawbridge

821 **hem raysted rekenly**: graciously bade them rise (from their knees: 818)

822 'Various men took hold of the saddle for him while he alighted'; the saddle is liable to slip during dismounting, especially when the rider is a heavily armed knight

823 **stif men inowe**: many stalwart men

824 **swyeres**: squires **comen** (*pa pl*) **doun**: i.e. from the hall (generally at first-floor level and reached by steps)

825 **with blisse**: with public celebration

826 **hef up**: took off **hyed**: hastened **inowe**: many (men)

827 'To take it from his hands, in order to be of service to the worthy man'

828 **bronde**: sword **blasoun**: shield

829 **haylsed**: greeted, saluted **hendly**: graciously

830 **mony proud man**: many a great man (cf. *C* 1177) **presed**: pressed forward

831 **hasped**: buckled **high wede**: noble array, i.e. armour **wonnen**: brought

832 **There**: where **flet**: floor **ferslyche brenned**: burned fiercely

833 **lede**: men, i.e. community over which the lord has authority (see footgloss to 679) **loutes fro**: makes his way from

834 **menske**: courtesy

835 **welde**: have control or command, be master **as yow likes**: as it pleases you

836–7 ‘Everything that is here is your own, to have and be master of at your pleasure’

838 **Grant mercy**: many thanks

839 ‘May Christ reward you for it’

840 **frekes**: men **fayn**: glad, well pleased

841 ‘Each enfolded the other in (his) arms’

842 **glyght on**: looked at **gome**: man **godly**: graciously **grette**: greeted

843 **bold burn**: fine man **that the burgh aghte** [had]: who ruled the castle

844 **for the nones**: certainly **of high elde**: at the height of his powers

845 **bever hued**: beaver-coloured, i.e. brown

846 **Sturne**: tough, dauntless **stif on the strythe** [stance]: firm on his legs

847 **Felle** [fierce, stern] **face as the fire**: a face as fierce as fire (cf.

832) **fre of his speche**: his speech expressing noble liberality

848–9 (cf. 679) **wel him semed ... To**: it well beseemed him to, he was well qualified to **for sothe**: in truth **segge**: man (Gawain) **lede a lordeschyp in lee of ledes ful goode**: head an estate of a worthy feudal community in a castle

850 **charred to**: led him aside into **chefly**: especially, particularly

851 **To delyver him a lede**: that a man should be given to him

852 **boun**: ready, obedient **bode**: bidding **burnes inowe**: many men

853 **bryght bour**: splendid chamber **there**: where **beddyng**: soft furnishings for a bedroom

854 **cortynes of clene silk**: bed-curtains of pure silk

855 **curious**: elaborate, intricately worked **panes**: sections, panels

856 'With (panels of) splendid fur on the top and embroidered side panels'

857 'The bed-curtains running on cords (going through) pure gold (curtain-)rings'

858 **Tapites tyght to the wowe**: hangings set upon the wall **tuly red silk tarse** fabric from Tharsia

859 **under fete**: underfoot **flet**: floor **of folwande sute**: i.e. the cloths on the floor match those on the wall

860 **dispoyled**: disarmed **speches of mirthe** [happiness]: cheerful talk

861 **bruny**: mail corslet **bryght wedes**: shining garments, i.e. armour

862 **Riche robes**: fine outfits; **robe** often indicated a *set* of clothes
rad: promptly **renkes**: men

863 **charge**: put on **chaunge**: have a change of apparel **chose of the beste**: select the best

864 **one hent**: took/chose one (outfit) **happed**: was enwrapped

865 **with saylande** [flowing] **skyrtes**: i.e. long and full-skirted

866 **ver**: spring **by his visage**: by his appearance, from the sight of him **verayly**: truly

867a **uche hathel**: each man

867b–68 clearly refers to the **Lowande** [glowing] colours of the costume covering Gawain's limbs; but, since 867b is metrically defective, there is evidently some corruption here, and only awkward sense can be made of the MS as it stands

869 **That:** so that **comloker:** more comely, fairer

870 **Hem thoght:** it seemed to them

871 'From wherever he had come'; the court does not discover who Gawain is or from whence he had come until 901–7: it was a rule of hospitality that guests should not be questioned as to their identity or business till they had been fed (cf. 254–5)

872 **moght:** might, could well

873 **withouten pere:** without peer/equal

874 **there:** where **felle:** fierce, stern **foght:** fought

875 **chymne:** fireplace **there:** where

876 Wordplay on **graythed** [made ready] and **graythly** [properly, suitably] **clothes:** fabrics, soft furnishings

877 **Whyssynes:** cushions **queldepoyntes:** quilted cloths **quoynte:** skilfully fashioned, well made

878 **mery:** beautiful

879 **broun** [dark], as specifying a colour, covered brown through violet or purple; a dark mauve or berry colour is probably indicated here **bleaunt:** a kind of fabric **enbrawdred:** provided with decorative detail; the verb 'embroider' covered any kind of in-sewing, e.g. of jewels or gold thread, as well as ornamental stitchwork **riche:** splendidly

880 **felles of the beste:** pelts of the most superior sort

881 **in erde:** in fact (a tag) **of the same:** i.e. matching (cf. 157, 170)

882 Wordplay on **sete** [sat] and **settel** [seat] **semlyche riche**: becomingly luxurious

883 **And achaufed him chefly**: and, most to the point, warmed himself up **his chere mended**: i.e. he felt better, cheered up

884 ‘Soon a **table** [board] was raised up on trestles in the proper fashion’ (the board is set up for and removed after each meal: cf. 1648, C 832); since it is Christmas Eve, the household has already eaten the single meal usual on a fast day, and the meal here is specially prepared for their guest

886 **Sanap**: ‘save-nap’, cloth runner over tablecloth **salure**: vessel for salt

887 **wesch**: washed (his hands) (cf. 72, C 831) **mete**: food

888 **semely inoghe**: very finely

889 ‘With **sewes** [stews, sauces] that were both **sere** [various] and **sete** [wholesome, appetizing], **sesounde** [mixed, cooked together] with the best ingredients’

890 ‘With double portions (cf. 61), as is the proper custom, and many kinds of fish’; since it is a fast day, the dishes are all fish rather than flesh

891 **bred**: pastry **brad on the gledes**: roasted over the coals

892 **sothen** [*pa ppl of ‘seethe’*]: boiled **sewe**: stew **savoured**: flavoured (cf. C 825)

893 **sawes**: sauces (often provided in separate dishes) **sleye**: skilful, expertly cooked **liked**: was pleased

894 **frely**: with generous courtesy (cf. 816 for the contextual social sense ‘showing appreciation’)

895 **hendly**: graciously, courteously **when**: whereupon, at which point **rehayted him**: encouraged him

896 **As hende**: as (equally) courteous men, i.e. being (themselves) courteous

897–8 **penaunce**: penitential fare **eft**: later, afterwards **amende**: improve (the household responds to Gawain’s compliment (894) by pointing out that the fare is actually that of a *fast* day not a *feast* day, but will (when Christmas Day comes) get more interesting, just as *penance* leads to spiritual *amendment*)

899 **much mirthe con make**: made merry, behaved cheerfully

900 'On account of the wine that made its way to his head'

901–2 'Then questions and enquiries were made of that noble man in a sparing (i.e. non-insistent) way by **poyntes** [observations] put to him whose purpose (to extract information) was **privy** [not obvious]'

903 **That he beknew cortaysly**: with the result that he courteously acknowledged

904 **athel**: noble **him one**: alone, i.e. as absolute sovereign

905 **That**: who

906 **hit**: it **Wawan**: *a variant form of Gawain* (cf. 348) **won**: dwelling place

907 **that Cristmasse**: those Christmas festivities **case**: chance
lymped: befell

908 **lord**: master of the house **hade lerned**: was informed **lede**: man (Gawain) (since Gawain is being served in his chamber with a meal specially prepared for him, the lord and other guests (cf. 910–11) are not present, but the news (of the guest's identity) is at once taken to them)

909 **so lef hit him thoghte**: so dear it seemed to him, i.e. so glad did it make him

910 **mote**: castle

911 **prestly**: promptly, eagerly

- 912–13 **That ... Apendes to his persoun:** to whom pertains **pris** [price *and* praise]: worth **prowes:** prowess in arms **purede:** flawless **thewes:** social and/or moral (good) qualities in behaviour **and prayed is ever:** and who is universally praised
- 914 **molde:** earth **mensk:** moral-social grace and standing
- 915 **Uch segge:** each man **ferre:** companion
- 916–17 ‘Now shall we see **sleghtes** [skills, arts] of **thewes** [manners, behaviour] becomingly (practised) and the flawless (command of) expressions proper to excellent talking’
- 918 **Wich sped** [what kind of success] **is in speche:** what can be done in the way of speech **unspurd:** without asking, i.e. without efforts of investigation (contrast 901)
- 919 **Syn:** since **fonged:** received socially (cf. 816), i.e. received as a guest **fyne** (cf. C 794, 1122): free of faults (like refined gold: cf. 633–4) **fader:** ‘father’, i.e. fount, wellspring **nurture:** courtly and gracious manners and conduct
- 920 **godly:** with good will, i.e. liberally **for sothe:** in truth
- 921 **That:** who (referring back to **God:** 920)
- 922 **When:** at a time (Christmas) when **burnes:** men
- 924 **menyng:** understanding **mere:** beautiful
- 926 ‘I think whoever may hear him’
- 927 **of luf-talkyng:** about speech that is a delight to hear

928 By that: by the time that **diner:** the first (or, on a fast day, as here, the only) meal of the day **the dere:** the noble one (Gawain)
uppe: risen from the table

929 ‘It was almost to night that the time had approached’

930 Chaplaynes: priests of the household chapel **chosen the gate:** took their way

931–2 Rungen ... To: rang the bells to summon to **hersum:** ?reverent
evensong of the highe tyde: i.e. Christmas Eve Vespers

933 loutes: makes his way **lady** was not a polite word for ‘woman’, but a status term, referring to the female equivalent of a lord and here indicating the ‘mistress’ of the house (whose existence is here mentioned for the first time)

934 closet: private enclosure – often situated, as here, in the chancel (cf. 946), close to the altar **coyntly:** with comely propriety **ho:** she

935 glydes: proceeds **gay:** richly apparelled, in his finery (see 862–70)

936 laches: takes **lappe:** fold (of the sleeve, which hung loose and long in fashionable dress: cf. *Pe* 201)

937 couthly him knowes: acknowledges him in the manner of a friend **his name:** by his name (see 908–9)

938 wye: man

939 throly: earnestly **ayther:** each **halched:** embraced; but the word does not alliterate and may be inauthentic

940 seten: they sat **samen:** together **the servyce while:** for the duration of the service

941 lyste: it pleased **loke on:** look toward, give her attention to

942 com ho of: she came out of **clere burdes:** lovely (attendant) ladies

943–4 **fayrest ... of all other**: fairer than all other woman **in felle** [skin]: in body **lere**: face **compas and colour**: figure and skin colour **costes**: (good) qualities, graces of manner

945 Wordplay on **wener** [more lovely] and **Wenore** [Guinevere] **then**: (even) than

946 **Ho chese**: she made her way **chaunsel**: chancel (the part of the church containing the choir and altar) **cherisch**: show favour to **that hende**: that gracious man

948 **alder**: older **auncian** [revered elder] is a term of respect

949 **with hatheles aboute**: by the men (i.e. attendants) surrounding her

950 **on to loke**: to look upon

951 **yep**: fresh, vibrant **volwe** [yellow], as applied to skin, meant 'wan, without ruddiness'

952 **red**: ruddiness **rayled** [spread] **aywhere**: to be seen everywhere

953 'Hairy, wrinkled cheeks hung loosely on that other'

954 **Kerchofes** (< OF *cuevre-chefs*) **of that one**: kerchiefs/head cloths belonging to the one lady (all married and older women covered their heads, but there were different styles of veiling: the younger lady has chosen the minimal amount of covering, which leaves her throat and breast exposed to view: 955–6)

956 **schyrer then**: more brightly than

957 **gorger**: neck-covering **gered**: decked, arrayed **swyre**: neck (contrast 955: the older lady's head coverings are concealing rather than revealing)

958 **Chymbled over**: wrapped up around **blake**: grey, lustreless **with**: by means of **vayles**: head cloths (here arranged to cover also the chin and forehead)

959 **frount folden in silk**: brow (also) enfolded in (further) silk
veiling **enfouled**: enwrapped

960 The sense of the key terms in this line is not known (see n. to 957–62)

961 **That noght**: so that nothing **burde**: lady

962 **twayne iyen**: two eyes; *with linking alliteration on -ne iyen*

963 **soure**: unattractive **sellyly**: wondrously, extremely **blered**:
bleary, watery

964 **mensk**: comely **on mold**: on earth (a tag) **man**: one

965 **For goode**: seriously, truly

967 **balwe**: swelling

968 **lykkerwys**: delicious **lik**: lick, taste

969 **that scho had on lode**: the one she had in her leading

970 ‘When Gawain looked on that beautiful one who was looking at him with courteous good will’ (cf. 842)

971 **leve**: permission (to approach the ladies) **laght**: taken, obtained
lut hem agaynes: turned towards them

972 **haylses**: hails, greets **heldande**: bowing

973 **loveloker**: lovelier **lappes**: enwraps, encloses

974 Kissing (within and between the sexes) was common as a social and friendly gesture (cf. 1979, 2492) **knyghtly he meles**: he speaks with the courtesy becoming a knight

975 **callen him of**: require from him **aquoyntaunce** [(closer) familiarity] indicated a friendly intimacy that went beyond mere ‘acquaintance’ in its ModE sense **quik**: earnestly **hit** [it] *is an anticipatory pronoun referring forward to 976a*

976 **her:** their **sothly:** truly **if hemself liked:** if it was pleasing to them

977 **tan** [take], **leden:** cf. 936; the ladies are taking over from the lord the hospitable escort of the guest (cf. 1315–16)

978 **chamber:** one of the smaller, more private rooms (as opposed to the large public ‘hall’), with its own **chymne** [fireside] **chefly:** directly, in particular

979 **Spyces:** spiced edibles (served over the evening as a nightcap and digestive) **unsparely:** unsparingly, in plenty **speded hem to brynge:** sped to bring to them

980 **wynnelyche:** delightful

981 **luflych:** in a good-humoured way **aloft:** to his feet

982 **Mynned ... upon mony sythes:** frequently exhorted

983 **Hent highly of:** ceremoniously/ostentatiously took off

984–5 ‘And directed them to win the honour of it (as a prize for) whoever might move (i.e. bring into being) most **mirth** [happiness, fun] for the duration of those Christmas festivities’

986 **fonde:** try **fylter:** struggle, contend

987 **Ere me wonte the wedes:** ‘before my clothing be wanting to me’, before I lose my clothes; i.e. the lord too will compete, to try and retain his hood

988 **laghande lotes:** laughing words **hit tayt makes:** behaves festively

989 **glade:** gladden, cheer **gamnes:** games, amusements

992 **lyght:** i.e. torches and candles to light the inmates to their beds

993 **his leve con nyme**: took his leave

994 **him dight**: betook himself

995 **morn as**: day when **mynes**: commemorates

996 **Dryhtyn**: (the) Lord **for our destine**: i.e. so that our destined end should be salvation in heaven

997 **Wele**: well-being, joy **waxes**: arises **won**: dwelling

998 **daynty**: choice foods

999a **Both at messe and at mele** is usually taken to refer to an informal meal or buffet (an unattested sense of **messe**) and a formal one; but the line is suspect, alliteration formed by repetition of the same word (**messe ... messes**) being highly anomalous

999b–1000 ‘Doughty men disposed upon the dais most skilfully made dishes of the best kind’; the **dese** was the transverse table – at the head of the side tables – where the most important diners were seated

1001 **auncian**: venerable **wyf**: woman **ho** [she]: *recapitulatory pronoun* (on the dais, the aged lady is given the place of honour to the right of the host and thus ‘sits highest’ or ‘begins the table’: cf. 112)

1002 **lovely her by lent**: seated with gracious friendliness beside her

1003 **gay burde**: beautiful lady (Gawain’s position at table is, as at Camelot, next to the hostess at the dais: cf. 109, 339)

1004–5 ‘(These four persons) in that very middle (at the dais) where the dishes would fittingly first come and then (pass) through all the hall, as (i.e. in the order that) best befitted them (the diners)’; the guests are seated and served in order of social precedence (cf. C 92) **messe**: course and/or portion of food

1006 **By**: once (cf. 2032) **at his degre**: in the order dictated by his rank **graythly**: duly

- 1007 **mete**: food **mirth**: joy, revelry
1008 **hit me tene were**: it would be trouble to me
1009 'If I should yet perhaps make a strenuous effort to set it down'
1010 **wot**: know **wale**: choice, beautiful
1011 **of her** [their] **compayny**: in each other's company **caghten**:
received
1012 **dere dalyaunce**: excellent conversation **derne**: private
1013 **carp**: speech **closed fro**: closed off from, excluding **fylthe**:
uncleanness, impropriety
1014 **play**: pleasurable occupation **passande**: surpassing, superior to
uch a prince game: every sport/pleasure open even to a prince
1015 **In vayres**: in truth
1016 **nakerys**: kettledrums
1017 **pipyng**: music of pipes **repayres**: assembles, is gathered
1018–19 'Each man attended to his own affairs, and those two
attended to theirs'
1020 **dut was ... driven**: revel was engaged in **that other**: the next
1021 **Saynt Johnes day** is 27 December **gentyll to here**: fine to hear
1022 **thrid**: third (day after Christmas), i.e. 28 December (Holy
Innocents' Day) **also thro**: in equally lively fashion **throng in**: pressed
in, came in
1023 **layk**: sport, revelry **thoghten**: had in mind, were aware (the
three feast days following Christmas were *festa ferianda* (holy days on
which all business or travel was forbidden); the last of them therefore
forms a natural terminus for the house party, the guests all being due
to leave the next morning: cf. 1024, 1028)

1024 to go: due to go **gray:** was a standard epithet for the dawn or morning

1025 Forthy: therefore **woke:** ‘watched’, i.e. stayed awake partying, revelled far into the night

1026 dryly: unceasingly **caroles:** ring dances performed to sung words

1027 lachen her leve: take their leave (of their host) (since the guests are due to go early (before dawn: **1126–7**), they make their goodbyes the night before; Gawain similarly performs the ceremony of leave-taking the night before a departure scheduled for very early the next day: 1960ff)

1028 ‘Each one who was **strange** [not an inmate of the house] due to go on his way’

1029 gave him good day is a parting formula (cf. e.g. 668) (Gawain, like the other guests, also intends to leave the next day – to resume his search, suspended for the duration of the holy days) **the goodman:** i.e. the owner of a house, the host in this case (cf. e.g. 1392) **him laches:** takes hold of him (cf. 936)

1030 Charres: turns, conducts **the chymne beside:** near to the fireplace

1031 drawes him on drye: draws aside **derely:** earnestly

1032–3 Of the wyne [joy-bringing] **worschip that he him wayved hade As to:** for doing him such a gratifying honour as to **highe tyde:** major Church festival, holy season (e.g. cf. 932)

1034 enbelyse: embellish **burgh:** castle **bele chere:** beautiful manners, graces of behaviour

1035–6 while ... me worthes the better [it will become for me the better] **That:** i.e. my whole life will be enhanced by the fact that **Goddess owne fest:** the feast day of God Himself (as opposed to a holy day associated with a saint)

1037 Grant mercy: French for ‘thank you’ **hit is youre:** i.e. it is you who have bestowed honour (on me), not I (on you)

1038 the **High-Kyng yow yelde**: may God reward you; Gawain always uses to his host the honorific plural pronoun *ye*, not the informal *thou*

1039 'I am a man at your disposal, to carry out your commands'

1040 'As I am **holden** [beholden, morally obligated] to do in great and small matters'

1041 **By right**: rightfully

1042 **fast con him payne**: earnestly exerted himself

1043 **holde lenger**: keep longer, detain (in his house)

1045 'That he could by no means (stay)'

1046 **frayned the freke ... at himselven** the man (i.e. the host) asked of him

1047 **derve dede**: tough business, demanding mission **driven**: compelled **dere tyme**: special time, major festival (cf. 92)

1048 **kenely**: hastily, urgently **kayre all his one**: take his way all on his own

1049 'Before the festive season was wholly withdrawn from houses'

1051 'An important mission and an urgent one took me from those living-quarters'

1052 **sumned myself to sech to**: called upon to make my way in person to

1053 '(Which) I do not know in what direction in the world to **wende** [go] to find'; *omitted relative pronoun followed by recapitulatory pronoun*

1054 **I nolde bot if I hit negh** [come near] **myght**: I would not (have it otherwise) but that I might approach it

1055 inwith: within **Logres:** Arthur's kingdom (see 691) **so me our Lorde helpe:** so help me God

1056 'Therefore, sir, I here make this request of you'

1057 tale: talk

1059 kepes: guards

1060 stabled: legally fixed, confirmed **statut:** compact, covenant

steven: agreement, appointment

1061 mere: boundary, demarcated or designated place **laste:** live long enough to do so

1062 ilk: same **bot naked:** only a mere small piece (cf. 1805), scarcely anything **wontes:** is lacking

1064 Gladloker: more gladly **then any good welde:** than possess any kind of goods

1065 by your wille: with your permission **wende me behoves:** it is necessary for me to go, I must go

1066 Naf (= *ne haf*) **I now to busy bot bare:** I have not now (any time left in which) to busy myself (in seeking out the chapel) except only

1067 'With me being as fain (= glad) to fall down **feye** [doomed to death] as to fail to accomplish the business I am pledged to' (**faile:** fail to stand by a promise or pledge)

1068 laghande: laughing **leng:** stay (as a guest) **thee behoves:** you must (see 1065)

1069 teche yow to: show you the way to (cf. *Pe* 936) **terme:** goal (of a journey), destination **by the tymes ende:** i.e. by the end of the three days left before New Year

1070 'Let the Green Chapel standing on the face of the earth trouble you no more'

1071 **at thyn ese**: in comfort

1072 **While forth-dayes** (cf. C 1764): until the day is well forth, until clear day, i.e. there will be no need to get up at or before dawn **ferk**: go, depart

1073 **merk**: target, place aimed at **mydmorn**: about 9.00 a.m. **make what yow likes**: do whatever it pleases you to do

1074 **In spenne**: there, in that place; **spenne** is a topographical term out of which a tag with loose sense is here created

1075 **Dwelles** (*pl imp*: see p. xviii) **while**: stay until

1076 **ris and raykes**: get out of bed and go

1077 '(I will provide) someone (who) will put you on the right road' (cf.1971)

1078 **henne**: hence, from here

1079 **gomenly**: happily, joyfully

1080 **thryvandely**: profusely, vigorously **thurgh all other thinges**: above all, first and foremost

1081 Gawain feels that, now that he knows where the Chapel is, he cannot fail to keep his promise (to do his best to arrive at it on New Year's Day: 402–3), and so his **chaunce** [adventure] is as good as **acheved**, i.e. 'in the bag'

1082 **Dwelle**: stay **elles**: otherwise, in all else **demen**: bid, say

1083 **him**¹ *provides the object for both* **sesed** [*took hold of*] *and* **set** [*seated*] **him beside**: beside himself, by his own side

1084 **Let the ladies be fette**: had the ladies brought **like hem**: entertain them

1085 **seme solace**: seemly pleasure **by hemself stille**: privately among themselves (see *MED stille adv* 4(a)); the other guests have said their farewells (1027–8) and gone to bed

1086 **let**: let out, uttered **luf**: pleasure, joy **lotes**: words, cries

1087 ‘(That he seemed) like a man who was about to go out of his wits and was acting on impulse’

1088 **carped**: spoke **cryande loude**: crying out loudly

1089 ‘You have said you will do what I say’ (see 1082)

1090 ‘Will you keep this promise here and now?’ (**at this ones**: on this occasion)

1091 **Ye**: yea, yes

1092 **bide**: remain, stay **burgh**: castle **bayn**: obedient **heste**: command, bidding

1093 **travayled**: toiled, taxed your strength **towen fro ferre**: journeyed from far away

1094 **sithen**: then **waked**: stayed up late **warist**: cured, recuperated

1095 **of sustnaunce ne of**: with respect to nourishment nor with respect to

1096 **leng**: linger, stay **loft**: upstairs room

1097 **while the Masse-while**: until the time of Mass **mete**: food, meal **wende**: go

1100 **lende** (*imp*): remain, stay

1103 **these**: these things

1104 **Him heldande**: bowing to him **as the hende**: like the courteous man he was (**as** = being someone who was: cf. 321, 896)

1105 **Yet ferre**: furthermore **freke**: man **we make**: let us make

1106 **wode**: wood, i.e. hunting ground **hit worthes to**: it will become

1107 **what chek so ye acheve**: whatever spoils you gain **chaunge me therefore**: exchange it with me for that, i.e. for what I give you

1108 'Dear man, let us exchange in this way, answer by letting me have your word on it'

1109 'To whichever man there thus befalls (what is) **lere** [empty] or better (in value)'; **lede** [*man*] is dative: it is the indirect object of the impersonal verb **lymp** [*fall to the lot of*]

1110 **the goode** is Gawain's sobriquet (cf. 109, 633) **I grante theretille**: I agree to that

1111 **yow lyst for to layke**: it pleases you to play games **lef hit me thinks**: 'dear it seems to me', i.e. I really appreciate it (cf. 909)

1112 'If someone will bring us the drink, this contract will be sealed'; drinking on an agreement, especially a mercantile one, was a way of formalizing it (cf. 1409, 1684, 1935); **this beverage**: the drink that is customary on such occasions; **this** is exophoric, referring to a category known to speaker and audience from outside the text (cf. 1139, 1514)

1113 **lord of that lede** [people]: master of that community (cf. 679, 833) **uchone**: each one

1114 **daylyeden**: 'dallied', conversed **dalten untyghtel**: ?talked informally

1115 **while that hem liked**: for as long a time as it pleased them

1116 **frenkysch fare**: 'French behaviour', in the French manner (France was the source and model of social and courtly behaviour and procedures) **fele**: many **lotes**: words

1117 stemed: fell silent **stilly:** quietly, calmly

1118 comlyly: pleasantly **caghten her leve:** took their leave of each other

1119 ‘With the aid of many an attendant (who was) happy (to perform that service) and gleaming **torches** [large waxen candles: cf. 1650]’

1122 ere: before **yede:** went

1123 Recorded: they rehearsed (cf. 392–3)

1124 olde: may be appreciative and/or knowing in tone (‘good old’) and may imply ‘no novice’, i.e. in the matter of being a lord and knowing how to play games and entertain guests; there is something of a wink to the audience in this fitt-closing comment

1125 ‘Knew well how to keep up sport’

1126 the folk: the servants, household staff; the specially early rising is because (a) all guests except Gawain are going home today (see **1024**) and must maximize the hours of daylight available for their *jour*(= day)neys; and (b) the lord is going hunting, which also involved a pre-dawn rising (1137; cf. 1101). The scene is set in the castle courtyard and depicts the preparations for departure of both groups: the guests (**1127–32**) and the huntsmen (1133ff)

1127 gromes: servants with outdoor and stable duties

1128 busken up bylive: rise up quickly **blonkes:** horses

1129 Tyffen her takles: set their gear in order **trussen her males:** pack their bags

1130 'The most important men (i.e. the masters, as opposed to the **gromes**) make themselves ready, having completed the preliminaries for a long ride'

1131 **lachen**: take hold of

1132 **wye**: man **there him wel liked**: to wherever it well pleased him

1133 **leve**: dear, good (attention here switches from the departing guests to the inmates preparing for the hunt)

1134 **Arayed for the rydyng**: prepared for serious riding (cf. 1130)

renkes: men

1135 A **sop** was a snack (typically bread soaked in milk, wine or water), which the lord here takes after Mass (which was heard fasting) in place of the first of the two main meals of the day (dinner, which Gawain eats after rising at 1312), the second (supper) taking place after he has returned from the field (1400)

1136 **bent-felde**: field **buskes bylive**: proceeds promptly

1137 **By that that**: by the time that, i.e. before **lemed**: shone

1138 **hatheles**: men **high horses**: tall (i.e. fine) horses

1139 **these cacheres that couthe**: the dog handlers who knew their trade well; **these** is *exophoric* (see 1112) **coupled her houndes**: 'coupled' their dogs; hunting dogs were leashed together, often in pairs, before being released to pursue the game

1141 **bigly**: stoutly, strongly **bare thre motes**: precisely three long calls

1142 **Braches** were smallish scenting and chasing hounds **therefore**: at that **breme**: vigorous, intense

1143–44a 'And they who were to take part in the **chasyng** [driving] of the deer checked and directed a hundred hunting-dogs' (**chastysed**: checked, *not* punished; **charred**: turned the course)

1146 The hunt is to be a 'drive', in which the deer will be driven towards pre-set stations or **trysteres**, where they will be brought down with the aid of special sorts of dogs – greyhounds (1170–71), a category which included *veuterres* or *alaunts*, for which handlers called *feuterers* (**vewters**) were responsible **yod**: variant of 'yede' [went]

1147 'Huntsmen took off the leashes' (by which the hounds are leashed to one another: see 1139)

1149 **rurd**: noise **forest**, like *wood* (cf. 1106) and *park* (768), often referred to a hunting preserve

1150 **quethe**: 'speech', utterance **quest**: (dogs engaged in the) hunt **quaked the wylde**: the wild animals quivered

1151 **Dere drof in the dale**: in the valley, the deer raced **doted for drede**: crazed with fear

1152 **Hyed to the high**: hastened to the high ground **heterly**: forcefully, sharply

1153 **Restayed with**: checked by **the stablye**: (those manning) one of the hunting stations placed so as to prevent the deer leaving the course in which they were to be driven **stoutly ascryed**: loudly shouted at them

1154 **herttes**: harts, male red deer **have the gate**: go their way, have egress **with the highe hedes**: with antlers (which female deer do not have)

1155 **breme**: vigorous, sturdy **bukkes**: bucks, male fallow deer **her**: their **paumes**: flat parts of antlers

1156–7 **fre**: noble, right-minded **in fermysoun tyme**: in the closed season (when male deer could not be hunted) **defende ... That there schulde no man meve to**: forbidden anyone to proceed against

1158 **hindes**: hinds, female red deer **Hay** (cf. 1445) and **Ware** [mind out!] were cries used in hunting

1159 does: female fallow deer **depe slades:** low-lying areas at the base of the slopes; the deer are driven back downhill from the high ground they have made for (**1152**) towards the *trysts*, which are situated on 'low' ground (**1170**)

1160 thay slypped: they (arrows) were let go **slentyng of arwes:** the shooting flight of arrows

1161 uch wende: each turning **wande:** (thinnish) branch **wapped a flone:** whapped an arrow

1162 bigly: firmly **bote** [bit] **on:** lodged themselves in **the broun:** the brown hides **hedes:** arrowheads

1163 What: Indeed **by bonkes:** on the hill slopes

1164 raches: 'braches' (see **1142**), dogs used in chasing **res:** rush **radly hem folwes:** rapidly pursue them

1165 high horne: loud horn

1166 crakkande: shattering **as:** as if **had brusten:** had burst apart with a crash

1167 'Whatever wild animal escaped men that shot arrows'

1168 to-raced: torn to pieces **(to)-rent:** rent apart **resayte:** receiving station, *tryst*

1169 'By the time that they had been **tened** [afflicted, harassed] on the high ground and **taysed** ['teased', harried, driven] to the water (i.e. to the low ground: cf. 1159, 1170)'

1170 The ledes were so lerned: so expert were the men (one of the many references to the hunt as an art and a discipline: cf. 1139, 1143) **low trysteres:** receiving stations situated on low-lying ground

1171 that gotten hem bylive: which got them at once

1172 hem to-fylched: fell upon them **as frekes myght loke:** i.e. in the blink of an eye

- 1173 **There right**: right there
1174 **abloy** has not been satisfactorily explained
1175 **con launce and lyght**: galloped forward and alighted
1176 **drof**: spent, passed
1178 **laykes**: sports, amuses himself **lyndewodes eves** [eaves]: in the outskirts of the wood
1179 **gay**: fine, splendid **lygges**: lies
1180 **Lurkkes**: remains under cover **while**: until **lemed on the woves**: gleamed on the walls
1181 **covertor ful cler**: most beautiful coverlet (coverlet and curtain are described at 854–6)
1182–3 ‘And as his mind slid along in slumber, he heard a slight sound (made) **sleyly** [so as not to attract attention] at his door and (heard) it **dernely** [secretly, quietly] open’
1184 **heves up**: lifts up
1185 **caght up**: lifted up
1186 ‘And looks furtively in that direction (to see) what it could be’
1187 **loveliest on lyve**: loveliest (of women) alive
1188 **dernly**: secretly, surreptitiously **stille**: quietly, stealthily
1189 **bowed**: went, proceeded **schamed**: felt embarrassed
1190 **lystily**: with careful art **let as** [behaved as if] **he slepte**: pretended to be asleep

- 1191 **ho**: she **stilly**: softly, gently **stel**: stole
- 1192 **Cast up**: lifted up **creped withinne**: crept within the curtained space
- 1194 **lenged**: remained **selly**: ‘wondrously’, extremely **to loke when he wakened**: to watch for when should wake up
- 1195 **lurked**: stayed covered up
- 1196–7 ‘Turned over in his mind what this action might point or amount to – to a marvel, it seemed to him’
- 1198 **semely**: seemly, decent **were**: would be
- 1199 ‘To see **in space** [in due course] by means of **spelle** [speaking (with her)] what she wants’
- 1200 **wroth**: ‘writhed’, twisted himself around **to-her-ward**: towards her
- 1201 **unlouked his iye-lyddes**: opened his eyes wider **let as him wondered**: acted out wonderment
- 1202–3 ‘And crossed himself, as if to **worthe** [be, become] the safer in his **sawe** [words, morning prayer] by accompanying it with such a hand gesture’ (the sign of the cross was believed to ward off evil)
- 1205 **in blande**: in commixture, blended together
- 1206 ‘Most charmingly did she **lete** [behave, demean herself]’
- 1207 **laghande**: laughing

1208 **moroun**: morrow, morning **gay**: beautiful

1209 *Gawain and the lady consistently address each other with the respectful ye* (see footgloss to 343) **a sleper unslye**: an incautious sleeper **that man may slyde hider**: in that one can slip in here; the reference is to military situations, in which sleepers were vulnerable to surprise attacks (cf. C 1765–88)

1210–11 The military metaphor continues through **tan as tite** [taken (prisoner) at once], **Bot true us may schape** [unless a truce can be brought about for us] and **bynde** [bind] **that be ye ful trayste**: be assured of that

1212 **laused**: released, uttered **tho bourdes**: those joking words

1213 **gay**: lovely (one) **blythe**: friendly, well disposed

1214 **Me schal worthe** [to me shall it come about] **at your wille** (cf. 1302): i.e. my fate is in your hands **me wel likes**: pleases me well

1215 'I surrender myself readily and call for mercy'; Gawain is taking up the lady's conceit of a 'captured' prisoner

1216 **dome**: judgement **me bos nede**: so must I needs (do)

1217 **bourded agayn**: jested back again (cf. 1212) **blythe laghter**: light-hearted laugh

1218 **wolde ye**: if you would **lady** (the female equivalent of a *lord*) is here used by Gawain to acknowledge the young wife as 'mistress' of his fate **leve**: permission to 'leave' a place (cf. 545, where Gawain asks *leve* from his *lord*)

1219 **deprece**: ?release from durance **prysoun**: prisoner **rise** is a kind of pun: it would be from his knees, rather than from his bed, that a surrendering knight (cf. 1215) might be graciously bidden to rise

1220 **bow of**: go from **buske me better**: array myself better, put myself in better array

1221 **kever**: acquire, get **carpe yow tille**: converse with you

1222 **beau sir** [my fine sir] is a French phrase often used with a touch of irony **swete**: fair one

1223–4 **Ye schal not**: you're not going to; 'will' and 'shall' retained their original senses when used as auxiliary verbs, 'will' implying volition, and 'shall' [must] futurity, compulsion or inevitability: the lady is exercising the captress's right to command **rest**: bed **I riche yow better**: I'll put you in better array (the lines are a response to 1220–21: the lady says she finds Gawain better wrapped for the purposes of *carp* (1221, 1225) in the bed 'clothes') **happe**: enwrap **here**: on this side (where she is sitting) **that other half also**: and on that other side as well

1226 **wene wel**: think well, am sure **iwysse**: indeed

1227 **worschipes**: honours, reveres **whereso**: wherever

1228 **hendelayk**: courtesy, gracious considerateness **hendely**: courteously, in courtly terms

1229 **With**: by **with all that lif bere**: by everyone alive

1230 **bot our one**: just (the two of us) on our own

1231 **lord**: husband **are on lenthe faren**: are some way away

1232 **burnes**: gentlemen; *burn* implies gentle birth; the reference is to well-born inmates and attendants: the menials arise at dawn and are already at work (1126) **burdes**: gentlewomen **also**: as well

1233 **drawen**: closed **dit**: (held) shut (cf. C 320) **derf haspe**: strong clasp

1234 **sithen**: since **him that all likes**: him who pleases everyone

1235 **ware**: spend, use **while**: time **while that hit lastes**: for as long as it lasts

1236 **tale**: talk, words

1237 'You are (a guest) welcome to **my corse** (i.e. me: cf. C 683)'

1238 **Your owen won** [recourse, choice of action] **to wale** [choose]:
to do as you will

1239 'It behoves me (i.e. I must) of very necessity'

1240 **and schale**: and I shall be; the offer of service was a respectful
gesture – here of host to an honoured guest – common in polite circles
(cf. 976)

1241 **gayn hit me thinkes**: your words are welcome to me

1243 **reche to**: reach, be equal to **reverence**: honour, high regard
reherse: set out, describe

1244 **wye**: a man **I wot wel myselven**: I myself know it well

1245–7 'By God, I would be glad **and** [if] you were pleased in respect
of any words or service I might dedicate to the pleasure of your
worthy self – it would be a sheer joy (to me)'; **your pris** [your worth]
is a polite form of address of the kind still heard in e.g. 'your
Highness'

1248 **gay**: beautiful

1249 **pris**: worth **prowes**: excellence **other**: others, other people

1250 **hit lakked** [found fault with] **or set at lyght** [set light by]:
dispraised it or put small value on it **hit were little daynte**: it would
show little courteous respect (on my part)

1251 **hit are ladies inogh**: there are plenty of ladies **that lever were
nowthe**: to whom it would now be dearer, i.e. who in today's world
would prefer

1252 Have thee, hende, in her holde: to have you, courteous one, in their custody

1253 To daly with derely: to converse with in a choice manner **for your daynte wordes:** through your exquisite speech

1254 Kever hem comfort: to get themselves a source of comfort (cf. 1221) **colen:** to cool, assuage **her:** their

1255 Then: than (*dependent on lever:* 1251) **garysoun:** treasure, valuables **gat that thay haven:** that they have won; Gawain as a prisoner would be prized beyond any other booty that had been gained

1256 love (*not 'lovy' [love]*): praise **ilk:** same **that the lyft holdes:** who holds the heavens in his hands (see C 734)

1257 hit ... that: that thing ... that

1258 Thurgh grace: through the grace (= free, i.e. unearned, gift) of God

1259 'Such good entertainment did she extend to him/So warm a welcome did she give him'; the expression was usually used with reference to the treatment of a guest

1260 That: (she) who

1261 skere: 'clear', fair, unexceptionable

1262 'Responded to each point'

1263 Madame: my lady **mery:** handsome, comely **Mary yow yelde:** may the Virgin Mary reward you

1264 fraunchise: magnanimity (in paying him such honour)

1265 The line appears to be corrupt, but its general sense is plainly: 'And have **fongen** [received] also equally gracious marks of respect from other members of the household'

1266 daynte: (marks of) courteous respectfulness **delen:** deal out, give **for my desert nis hit:** is not occasioned by my deserts

1267 ‘It is the honourable worth of yourselves (which dictates such honourable treatment of me), who can (see and do) nothing but what is well’

1268 By Mary: by the Virgin Mary (countering 1263) **menskful:** honourable or courtly person **me think hit an other:** the case seems to me to be a different one

1269 were I: if I were **won:** means, wealth

1270 wele: wealth

1271 And I schuld: and (if) I were to **chepen:** conduct mercantile negotiations, i.e. go shopping **cheve me a lorde:** obtain for myself a husband

1272 costes: qualities **knownen upon thee:** found in you

1273 debonerte: gracious behaviour **blythe semblaunce:** pleasant manner

1274 ‘And all that I have before heard (of you) and now (having met you) hold it to be true’; Gawain was famed for his courtesy (cf. 908–27)

1275 freke upon folde: man on earth **before yow:** in preference to you

1276 worthy: good lady **wye:** man **waled wel better:** chosen much better (a reference to the lady’s husband)

1277 pris that ye put on me: excellence that you impute to me

1278 soberly: in all seriousness **soverayn:** superior, mistress **holde:** consider

1279 Cryst yow foryelde: may Christ reward you

1280 meled: talked **muchwhat:** many matters **mydmorn:** about 9.00 a.m.

1281 'And always the lady behaved as if she liked him and **loved** [praised] him a lot'; but the line has been editorially reconstructed from a corrupt MS reading

1282 **ferde with defence**: practised defence, used defensive measures
feted: acted, behaved

1283-4 'Even had it been the most beautiful of women, the man had with him in his mind the less (capacity for) love because of the **lur** [perdition] he was making his way to'; **lode** [load] was used of a 'journey', and may here refer to what one leads or carries with one (cf. 969) on a (grim) journey: Gawain's luggage does not include refinements, of the material kind (as he points out at 1808-9) or of the emotional kind, i.e. amorous sensibility

1285 **Bout hone**: without delay

1286 **dint**: blow **deve**: 'deafen', stun, confound

1287 **nedes**: necessarily

1288 **speke**: spoke **leve**: permission to depart

1289 'He granted (it) to her very promptly'

1290 **ho**: she **glent**: glance

1291 **stouned him with ful stor wordes**: delivered in words a stiff blow that stunned him

1292 'Now may He that **spedes** [gives success or efficacy to] each act of speech reward you for this pleasant diversion'

1293 **ungayn gos hit in mynde**: with difficulty does it go into the mind, i.e. is hard to believe

1294 **freschly**: with energy, eagerly

1295 **Ferde**: feared **castes**: utterances (cf. 249); Gawain, famed for his courtesy (see 912-27), fears he may have been discourteous in some way

1296 **burde**: lady **By this skylle**: for the following reason

1297 **gaynly**: directly, explicitly; the allusion is to Gawain's sobriquet of 'good' (see 109, 633)

1298 **is closed so clene**: is so perfectly enclosed

1299 **Couth not lyghtly have lenged**: could not easily have remained

1300 'Without requesting a kiss through his (skills in) courtesy'; the lady interprets Gawain's 'goodness' and **courtaysye** as implying skills in gallantry

1301 'By lightly bringing up some little thing at the conclusion of some remark', i.e. by giving a suggestive little concluding twist to something said; for the application of **touch** to words, cf. 1541, where it figures as a verb meaning 'discourse upon'

1302 **worthe**: let it be **as yow likes**: as it pleases you

1303 **as a knight falles**: as it behoves a knight (who must obey his **soverayn**: 1278) to do

1304 **prestly** (emendation of MS *fire*): promptly, at once **he** refers back to **a knight** (1303) **plede** argue (a legal case for), sue for (cf. *Pe* 563)

1305 **Ho**: she **nerre**: nearer **catches**: takes

1306 'Bends amicably down and kisses the man'

1307 'With becoming propriety they commend each other to God (i.e. say goodbye [God be with you] to each other)'

1308 **dos her forth**: betakes herself, goes out **withoute dyn more**: without more ado

1309 **riches him**: prepares himself, gets ready **rapes him sone**: makes haste at once

1310 'Calls to his bedroom servant, choses his clothes'; a **chamberlayn** is assigned to Gawain along with a bedroom (851) and **wede** [clothing: 862–3], for the only dress he has with him is the armour he arrives and leaves in

1311 **Bowes forth**: goes forth **boun**: ready **blythely**: readily, promptly

1312 **mete**: food, meal **menskly**: courteously, in a civilized fashion **keped**: awaited

1314 **game**: amusements, pleasure, recreation

1315 **fayrer**: more beautifully **fonge** [taken]: received socially (cf. 816); but the word retains some of its concrete sense, since the ladies obviously 'take' Gawain physically **Bitwene** them (1316) as they literally 'lead' him (cf. 977) through an entertaining day

1316 **dyngne dame**: worthy ladies

1317 **alder**: elder

1318 **solace**: pleasure **set thay**: they made for themselves **same**: together

1319 **lent on**: engaged in

1320 **holtes**: woods, groves **barayne**: without offspring

1321 **somme**: sum **slow**: killed **helded**: went down

1322 **to deme were wonder**: it would be a marvel to estimate

1323 **fersly**: vigorously **flokke in**: flocked together

1324 **quelled**: killed, slaughtered **querre**: 'quarry', collection of game

1325 **The best**: the best-born men **bowed thereto**: made their way there

1326 **Gedered**: gathered **the grettest of gres**: the fattest deer

1327 'And had them broken up professionally, in the way the procedure requires'

1328–9 ‘A selected few of those that were present examined them at the assay: two fingers’ thickness of fat they found on even the worst of them’

1330–31 ‘After that they slit the **slot** [the hollow running down from the base of the throat], took the **erber** [first stomach], trimmed it with a sharp knife and tied up the gleaming (organ) with a knot’

1332–4 ‘Then they cut (the skin round) the four limbs and tore off the hide. Then they broke open the belly, took out the entrails carefully, to avoid undoing the **lere** [ligature] of the knot’

1335–6 ‘They took hold of the throat and neatly separated the gullet from the windpipe and pulled out the guts’

1337–9 ‘Then they cut out the shoulders with their sharp knives, pulled them out through a small opening so as to keep the sides in one piece. Then they cut open the breast and pulled it in two’

1340–43 ‘And then one man begins again at the throat, cuts it open swiftly up to the **byghte** [fork of the forelegs], clears out the neck offal, and in the true way thereafter they quickly loosen all the membranes from the ribs’

1344–8 ‘Thus they trim away (the offal) in the right manner along the backbone right down to the haunch, so that it hung all together, and they lift it up whole, and cut it off there, and that they understand (**neme** [take]) as by **kynde** [nature] constituting what, as I believe, they call by the name of the numbles’

1349–52 ‘At the fork of the thighs they remove the **lappes** [folds of flesh] at the back (of the thighs). They hasten to hew it (the carcase) in two, dividing it along the backbone’

1353–5 ‘Both the head and the neck they cut off then, and after that they separate the sides swiftly from the chine (i.e. spine), and the **corbeles fee** [raven’s perquisite] they cast into a grove’

1356–8 ‘Then they pierced each of the thick sides through the ribs, and then used the hocks of the legs (thrust through the holes) to hang the sides by. Each man receives the perquisite that it conventionally befalls him to have’

1359–61 ‘On a piece of skin from the animal they feed their dogs with the liver and the lungs, the lining of the stomachs, and bread soaked in blood mixed in with it’

1362–4 ‘Boldly they blew the horn signal for **prys** [capture or taking of game], the dogs bayed, and then they take their meat and turn homewards, forcefully blowing many firm **notes** [single notes]’

1365 **By that:** By the time that **douth:** company **wonnen:** arrived

- 1366–7 **there**: where **bides Ful stille**: stays quietly at home
1368 **bette**: kindled
1371 ‘There was nothing but happiness to be enjoyed at will’
1372 ‘Then the lord commanded all the household to be gathered together in the **sale** [hall]’
1373 **on lowe to lyght**: to come down **her burdes**: their attendant gentlewomen
1374 **flet**: floor of the hall
1376 **godly**: in a good-humoured way **in game**: sportively
1377 ‘Directs his attention to the tails of very sturdy beasts’, i.e. points to the number of separate animals
1378 **schyre grese**: bright flesh **schorne**: cut
1379 **payes**: pleases **pris** [pre-eminence, distinction] **wonnen**: excelled (as a hunter)
1380 **thryvandely**: abundantly **craft**: skill **served**: deserved
1381 **wayth**: game, animals of the hunt
1384 **by acorde of covaunt**: according to our contractual agreement **crave**: demand, claim
1385 **segge**: man **that ilke**: the same thing

- 1386 **That:** what **these wones withinne:** inside this house
1387 **worthes to youres:** it shall become yours
1388 'He clasps his (the host's) fair neck within his arms'
1389 **comlyly:** properly, with affection (cf. 1794) **avise:** devise
1390 **Tas yow** (*imp*): take, receive **chevisaunce:** gains, profit **cheved:** achieved, gained
1391 'I would vouchsafe (i.e. grant) it unreservedly, even though there were more of it'
1392 **goodman:** head of the household **grant merci:** many thanks (cf. 1037) **therefore:** for it, for that
1393–4 'It may be such as to be even better, if you were willing to tell me where you won this **wеле** [desirable property] with your own cleverness'
1395 **forward:** (part of) the agreement **frayst me no more:** seek no more of me (than was agreed)
1396–7 'Since you have taken all that is due to you, believe well you may (have) nothing further'
1398 **made hem blythe:** made merry
1399 'With excellent interchange of words' (**were to lowe:** were to be admired: cf. 356)
1400 **yede:** went **as swythe:** quickly
1401 **dayntyes:** delicacies **inowe:** aplenty
1402 **chymne:** fireplace **seten:** sat
1403 **Wyes:** men **wale:** fine **weyed:** brought

1404 **eft**: again **bourdyng**: joking, sport **baythen**: agree **in the morne**: the next day

1405 **fylle ... forwardes**: fulfil ... agreements

1406–7 ‘Whatever chance befalls, to exchange their winnings, whatever in the way of a new thing they had got, when they met again at night’

1408 **acorded of**: agreed to

1409 **bourde**: sport, jest; contracts were sealed with a drink: the agreement is playfully treated as a formal compact (cf. 1112)

1410 **leghten leve**: took leave

1411 **busked bylive**: proceeded quickly

1412 **By that**: by the time that **bot thryes**: only three times (i.e. it is not yet dawn: n.)

1413 ‘The lord had jumped out of his bed, and each of the men’

1414–15 ‘Once the meal and the Mass had been duly dispatched, the company made their way to the woods, before any daylight had dawned’

1417 **High**: vigorously **hunt**: hunter

1418 **in space**: in due course

1419 **Uncoupled**: unleashed (see 1139 and footgloss) **tho thornes**: those thorny thickets

1420 ‘Running hounds that ran with headlong rush’

1421 ‘Soon they (the dogs) bay to announce pursuit (of a quarry detected) at the side of a stretch of shrubby marshland’

1422 **hunt:** huntsman **rehayted:** encouraged **that hit firste mynged:** that first announced it

1423 **Wylde:** loud **hem warp:** uttered to them **wrast:** forceful, loud

1424 **swythe:** swiftly

1425 **as fast:** as fast as possible **fuyt:** trail, track of the hunted animal

1426 **glaverande glam:** resounding noise **gedered raches:** assembled hounds

1427 **rocheres:** rocky hills

1428 **hardened:** urged on, encouraged

1429 **semble:** group **sweyed:** moved

1430–33 ‘... between a swamp in that wood and a forbidding crag.

On a mound near a cliff at the side of the marshland, at a point where the rugged cliff had collapsed in massive pieces, they (the dogs) went to the search, and men [went] after them’

1434–6 ‘The men scoured the crag and the mound too, until they were quite sure that the beast which had been announced there by the bloodhounds was somewhere within the ring they had formed’

1437 **buskes:** bushes **him:** i.e. the boar

1438 ‘And he dangerously issued out through the line of men’

1439 **On** [one] **the sellokest swyn:** incomparably the most prodigious boar (cf. 137)

- 1440 I.e. long ago old enough to have left the **sounder** [herd of wild swine] to roam alone (n.)
- 1441 **borlych**: sizeable **althergrattest**: biggest possible
- 1443 **thrust**: thrust, attack **thryght**: pushed, forced
- 1444 'And sprang forth at great speed without more delay'
- 1446 **Haden**: took **heterly**: eagerly **rechated**: blew the horn signal to summon dogs and huntsmen
- 1447 **Mony**: i.e. many-tongued **mery mouth**: fine cry
- 1448 **bost**: threats
- 1449 **To quelle**: to kill (it)
- 1450 **bides the bay**: stands at bay, i.e. turns around when cornered to face the barking hounds
- 1451 **mute**: pack of dogs **in melle**: thereto, in the process
- 1452 **of the houndes**: some of the dogs
- 1453 **yomerly**: piteously **yaule**: howl
- 1454 **schowven to**: pressed forward
- 1455 **Haled to him of her arewes**: drew their bows (and fired) arrows at him
- 1456–7 'But the arrowheads lost force on impact with the **pyth** [tough skin] that clung to his **scheldes** [hide at the shoulders] and none of the barbs would penetrate his brow'

- 1458 **schyndered**: shattered
1459 **hed**: arrowhead **hypped ayayn**: bounced back
1460 'But when the blows of their unremitting strokes started to distress him'
1461 **braynwod for bate**: battle-frenzied **rases**: rushes
1462 **heterly**: grievously **hyes**: dashes
1463 **arwed**: took fright **allyte drowen**: held back
1464 **launces**: gallops
1465 **bent**: field
1466 **rechated**: blew the recheat (see 1446) **rones**: thornbushes
1467 **Suande**: pursuing **schafted**: ?sent horizontal beams (i.e. was low in the sky)
1468 **driven**: pass
1470 **graythly**: in a regular way, 'right and tight' **geres**: (bed-)trappings
1473 **salue**: greet
1474–5 'She was with him very early in order to change his attitude'
1476 **totes**: peeps
1478 'And she returns his greeting in very ready words'

- 1479 **swythely**: gaily
1480 **lovely**: friendly, affectionate **layd him**: put to him
1481 **me thinkes**: it seems to me
1482–4 ‘... a man who is always so thoroughly given to good conduct, and yet you don’t know how to observe the **costes** [manners] of polite society, and if one teaches you to know them, you cast them from your mind’
1485 **yederly**: promptly **that**: that which
1486 ‘By the truest indication in words that I could manage’
1488 **that ye breve**: what you say
1489 **kende ... of**: taught about **the clere**: the beautiful lady
1490 ‘Wherever good will is manifest quickly to claim (a kiss)’
1492 **Do way ... that speche**: enough of those words **derf**: doughty
1493 **devayed**: refused
1494 ‘If I were repulsed it would put me in the wrong, indeed, to have made the proffer’
1495 **Ma fay**: By my faith **mery wyf**: fair woman
1496 **stif**: strong **yow likes**: it pleases you
1497 ‘If anyone were to be so ill-mannered as to want to repulse you’

1499–1500 ‘But force is unblessed in the land where I reside, as is any gift that is not given with good will’

1501 **yow likes**: it pleases you

1502–3 ‘You make take it when it pleases you and leave it when it seems good to you, at any time’

1504 **loutes**: bends

1507 ‘About love’s grief and happiness’

1509 ‘... if it would not make you angry, what the reason might be’

1510 **yep**: lusty, vibrant

1511 **oute**: everywhere

1512–13 ‘And to choose from the subject of knighthood, the chief thing that is **alosed** [praised] is the faithful practice of love, which is the very bible (**lettrure**: learning in written form) of knighthood’

1514–17 ‘For, to speak of the endeavour of these faithful knights, what forms both the descriptive heading and the whole text of their works is how men for the sake of their faithful love have risked their lives, have endured for their **drury** [romantic love] grievous tribulations’

1518–19 ‘And have afterwards avenged themselves with their valour and ended their suffering and brought bliss into the chamber by their own deeds of prowess’

1520 **comlokest kyde of your elde**: famed as the finest knight of your generation

1521 **word**: fame **worschip**: esteem, high standing

1522 **sere twyes**: on two separate occasions

1523 **helde**: come

1524 **longed**: pertained

1525 **quoynt of your hetes**: punctilious in your assurances (of knightly service)

1526 **Oghe**: ought **thing**: creature **yerne**: to desire

1528 **lewed**: uneducated, ignorant **that all the los weldes**: you who possess all the renown

1529 **dille**: slow-witted **dalyaunce**: conversation skills

1531 **com**: came

1532 **game**: (skill or accomplishment in) pleasant pastime

1533 **Dos teches me**: do teach me; **Dos** is used to give emphasis to a following imperative (cf. Pa 204)

1534 **fro hame**: not at home

1535 **God yow foryelde**: may God reward you

1538–9 ‘And so far trouble yourself with so humble a man as to entertain yourself in the company of your knight with a show of favour of any kind – it affords me pleasure’

1540 **torvayle**: labour, effort

1541 **touche**: discuss **temes of tyxt**: subjects dealt with in literary texts; Gawain is responding to the lady's reference at 1512–19 to how knights are portrayed in romances

1542–5 'To you who (as I am well aware) have more skill in that art, by half, **or** [than] a hundred of such as I am or ever shall be in the world where I live – that would be a manifold folly, my noble (lady), upon my word'; **or** at 1543 is from *ar(e)* [before], not *other* [or]

1546 'I would like to do your will to the best of my ability'

1549 **him frayned**: tried him out **fonded**: tested

1550 'In order to bring him to (moral) harm, however else she might herself have regarded the matter'

1551 **semed**: was apparent

1552–3 'Nor any wrongdoing on her side or on his, nor did they undergo anything but happiness'

1554 **layked**: played, amused themselves

1556 **con scho fonge**: she took

1558 **ruthes him**: bestirs himself

1559 **dight**: prepared **derely**: in a fine manner

1560 **layked**: played, indulged in amusements

1561 **launched**: galloped

1562 **Sues**: follows **uncely**: ill-boding, dangerous **swynges**: rushes
bonkes: slopes

1563–5 ‘And slashed asunder the backs of the best of his dogs where he stood at bay, until archers broke it (i.e. the **bay**, the defensive position of the animal) and forced him to move into the open despite himself’

1566 **flones**: arrows **flete**: fledged, sped **gedered**: gathered

1567 ‘But yet he made the boldest man leap aside at times’

1568 **mate**: overcome, exhausted (cf. ‘checkmated’)

1569–70 ‘But as hastily as he can he gets to a **rasse** [level piece of ground] in front of a hollow formed by an inlet in the rocky bank where the stream runs’

1571 **gete the bonk at his bak**: stood with his back to the bank

1572 **femed**: foamed **wykes**: corners

1573b–76 ‘Then all the bold men who stood near him became vexed with him and with attacking him from a distance, yet no one dared to get close to him because of the danger’

1578–80 ‘That all were then most reluctant to face the prospect of being further slashed by the tusks of him who was both fierce and frenzied’

1581 **cachande**: urging on **blonke**: steed

1582 **biside**: nearby

1583 **lyghtes**: alights **luflyche**: i.e. in a self-possessed way **corsour**: knight’s horse, charger

1584 **Braydes out**: draws **bryght bronde**: gleaming sword **bigly**: sturdily

1585 **Foundes**: proceeds **there**: where **the felle**: the fierce (animal)

1586 **The wylde**: the wild (beast) **wye**: man

1587 ‘Raised his hairs right up, so fiercely he snorted ...’

1588 ‘That many feared for the man lest the worse (of the encounter) should befall him’

1589 **settes him out**: sets off **on the segge even**: straight at the man

1590 **That**: so that, with the result that

1591 ‘Where the current was strongest – it was the other (i.e. the boar) who got the worse of it (cf. 1588)’

1592 **merkkes**: takes aim at

1593 ‘Set the sharp (blade) firmly right in the **slot** [hollow at the base of the throat]’

1594 **hult**: hilt of the sword **that**: so that **schyndered**: split, was cleft

1595 **yarrande**: snarling **him yelde**: yielded, succumbed **yedoun** (= *yede down*): went down

- 1596 **tite**: quickly
1597 **hent**: seized
1598 'That savagely sank their teeth into him'
1599 **to bent**: to the field, ashore
1600 **to deth endite**: consign (him: 1599) to death
1601 **prys**: horn signal announcing a kill **breme**: sturdy
1602 **with hatheles that myghte**: by men who (having their mouths free from horns) could do so (cf. 1914)
1603 **as bidden the maysters**: as the experts command
1604 'Who were the huntsmen-in-chief of that demanding hunt'
1605 **wodcraftes**: the arts of the hunt
1606 **unlace**: dismember **lovely**: adroitly
1607 **on high settes**: sets it up (on a stake)
1608 'And then splits him open all rough (i.e. unflayed) along the backbone'
1609 **Braydes**: draws **glede**: coal fire
1610 **blent**: mixed **braches**: hounds
1611 **brittenes out**: chops out **brawne**: flesh **scheldes**: slabs
1612 **has**: takes **hastlettes**: choice cuts **as highly bisemes**: as is in accord with best practice
1613 'And he folds the two halves, still all whole, together'

- 1614 **sithen**: then **stif stange**: strong pole **stoutly**: firmly
1615 **swythe**: quickly **ilk**: same
1616 **before the burnes selven**: ahead of the selfsame man
1617 **forferde**: destroyed
1620 **him thought ful longe**: it seemed to him a long time (i.e. he couldn't wait to see Gawain)
1621 **gayn**: readily
1622 'To receive his dues there'; **fees** punningly equates the **fees** [payments] owed to Gawain under the terms of the game with the **fees** [entitlements to particular portions of game: see 1358] enjoyed by huntsmen
1623 **loude with lote** [sound]: loudly
1625 **geten**: fetched **gedered the meyny**: the household (was) gathered together
1626 **scheldes**: slabs of boar's flesh **schapes hem the tale**: gives them an account
1627 **lithernes**: hideousness
1628 **werre**: 'war', onslaughts **there**: where
1630 **pris**: superior prowess (cf. 1379) **proved**: demonstrated
1633 **hende**: courteous

1634 'And **let** [acted] with abhorrence at it in order to **here** [praise] the lord'

1635 **this game**: this venison

1636 **By fyne forward and fast**: by formal and firm agreement
faythely: truly

1637 **soth**: true, right **as siker true**: as reliably true (as you are)

1638 **get**: winnings **agayn**: in return (for what you give me)

1639 **hent**: took **hathel**: man **halse**: neck **hendly**: courteously, prettily

1640 'And a second time he provided him with the same thing' (i.e. he gave him a second kiss)

1641 Wordplay on **even** [clear of debt, square] and **eventide** [evening]

1643 **By lawe**: in due legal form

1644 **Saynt Gile**: Saint Giles

1646 **ben**: will be

1647 'If you acquire such (valuable) merchandise': a masculine wink as to the 'value' of the kisses (cf. 1392–4)

1648 'Then they erected **tables** [boards] on top of trestles'

1649 **clothes**: tablecloths **upon**: on top (of the boards)

1650 **Wakened**: lit **by woves**: along the walls

1651 '(They) seated the men and served them throughout the hall'

1652 **glam**: noise **gle**: music **glent**: sprang

1653 **upon flet**: on the floor, i.e. in the hall **and on fele wyse**: (music and sounds) in many fashions

1654 **athel**: noble

1655 'Such as **coundutes** [motets, part-songs] for Christmas and novel **caroles** [songs for ring dances]'

1656 **manerly**: decorous

1658–60 'Such **semblaunt** [signs of favour] she prettily directed to that man, surreptitiously stealing **countenance** [meaningful looks] at him, to ingratiate herself with that stalwart one, that the man was quite at a loss and at division within himself (i.e. divided between instincts to be agreeably friendly and to repel her advances)'

1661–3 'But he would not for the sake of his **nurture** [good breeding] turn against her, but treated her in every respect with courtesy, no matter how this course of action might turn to his harm'

1665 'As long as their desire (to do that) lasted for them'

1666 **he** refers to the lord, **him** to Gawain

1668–9 **dalten**: conversed **demed eft newe To norne on the same note**: agreed once again to return to the same business

1670 **kayre**: go

1671 'For it was near to the time of the appointment that he had (to go) to'

1672 'The lord prevented him from doing that, detained him to make him stay longer'

1673 **segge**: man **siker my trauthe**: pledge my faith

1674 **cheve to**: get to **thy charres to make**: to conduct your business

1675 **Lede**: man **on New Yeres lyght**: at the first light (= dawn) of New Year's Day **long before pryme**: i.e. before 9.00 a.m. (n.)

1676 **Forthy**: therefore **thou lye in thy loft**: lie in your upstairs room
lache: take

1677 **holt**: forest **holde the touches**: ?keep to the terms agreed

1678 'Exchange gains with you when I come back here'

1679 **fraysted**: tested **twys**: twice

1680 'Now bear in mind tomorrow "may the third time turn out best"
,

1681 **myne upon**: put our minds to

1682 'For one can have trouble whenever one likes'

1683 **graythely**: duly **lenged**: detained

1684 **Blythe**: promptly **hem**: to them (agreements were sealed with **drink**: cf. 1112, 1409) **yeden**: went

1685 **With lyght**: with the provision of torchlight

- 1688 **his craftes kepes**: keeps up his chosen pursuits
- 1689 **dight**: dressed
- 1691 **Mery**: fair, pleasant **mounture**: horse
- 1692 **schulde helden him after**: were to follow him
- 1693 **boun busked**: ready prepared **blonkes**: horses
- 1694 **Ferly**: wondrously, very **folde**: ground **clenged**: lay on the ground
- 1695 **In red rudede upon rak**: in redness ruddied upon the clouds
- 1696 **costes**: skirts **welkyn**: sky
- 1696 **unhardeled**: unleashed hounds **holt side**: forest edge
- 1697 **Rocheres**: cliffs **by rys**: in the woodland **rurd**: noise
- 1699–1700 ‘Some (dogs) picked up the scent (that indicated) where the fox was, they trail him with much turning to one side or another, according to whatever stratagem their artfulness prompted’; the fox was famed for twisting and turning so as to leave a confusing trail (cf. 1707)
- 1701 **kenet**: small running-hound **hunt**: huntsman
- 1702 **fallen him to**: run to him **fnasted ful thikke**: snorted heavily
- 1703 **Runnen**: ran **in his right fare**: following accurately the course he (the fox) had taken
- 1704 **fyskes**: runs here and there, runs around **hem before**: ahead of them
- 1706 **Wreyande him ful weterly**: announcing his location most clearly **wroth**: aggressive

1707 trantes and tournayes: uses stratagems and wheels around
tene greve: rough grove

1708 Havalounes: runs a crooked course **herkenes:** listens

1709 ‘Finally he runs over a patch of open land under cover of a little ditch’

1710 ‘Emerges very cautiously onto a **rande** [strip] of marshy scrubland’

1711 ‘Thought he had got out of the wood by his artfulness, away from the dogs’

1712 ere he wyst: before he knew it **wale tryster:** fine hunting station

1713–14 ‘Where three vigorous (greyhounds) in one swoop threatened him all together, all grey’

1715 blenched ayain bylive: shied back quickly

1716 stifly start astray: struck out hard (in a new direction)

1717 on lyve: in the world

1719 lef upon list: delightful to the sense of hearing **lythen:** hear

1720 ‘When the whole pack had encountered him, (their cries) all blended together’

1721 sorwe ... set on his hede: directed such curses at him

1722 clamberande: clustering

1723 halowed: shouted at **hatheles:** men

1724 Yonde: yonder, over there **yayned:** opposed, encountered
yarrande: snarling

1725 **threted**: abused

1726 **titleres** were hounds let slip from relay stations as the quarry passed

1727 **out rayked**: broke from cover

1728 **reled in ayain**: he swerved back in **Reynarde**: the fox (OF *renart*), personified as Reynard in medieval beast epics

1729 **lad hem by lagmon**: led them on at his tail **meyny**: household

1730 **while mydoverunder**: until about noon

1731 **hende**: courteous, amiable **holsumly**: healthfully, to the benefit of his health

1732 **cortynes**: bed curtains

1733–4 'But the lady, because of love, had no thought of sleeping or of (allowing) the purpose fixed in her heart to weaken'

1736 **mery**: beautiful **mete to the erthe**: extending to the ground

1737 'That was lined most splendidly with colour-enhanced furs'

1738–9 'There were no fine colours on her headdress except the splendid gems which were studded around her hairnet in clusters of twenty'; i.e. colour from a head covering (which married women always by convention wore) comes from nothing less or other than her jewelled hairnet (cf. footgloss to 954)

1740 **thryven**: splendid **throwen all naked**: laid bare

- 1743 **Wayves up**: opens **wye**: man
1744 **radly** [quickly] **thus rehayted** [reproached] **him**: burst out with the following reproof to him **riche wordes**: goodly speech
1745 **With chere**: with a friendly demeanour
1748 **droupyng**: sleep disturbed by bad dreams
1749 **con her here**: heard her
1750 **drye**: heavy **draveled**: babbled, muttered **that noble**: that noble man
1751 **mournyng**: distress **thro**: intense
1752 **schulde ... dele him his wyrde**: was to deal him his fate
1754 **without debate more**: without further struggle; Gawain cannot, by the terms of the agreement, defend himself
1755 **that comlyche**: that beautiful lady **kevered**: recovered
1756 **swevenes**: dreams **swares**: answers
1758 **Fel over**: dropped herself down to **fetly**: prettily
1759 **with a wale chere**: with marked good will
1760 **gayly atyred**: gorgeously attired
1761 **hues**: i.e. rosy complexion (cf. 944, 952) set amid the bright hues of her gemmed hairnet (1738)

- 1762 **Wyght wallande joy**: strong joy welling up in him
1763 **smothe**: amicable **smolt**: peaceful, relaxed **smeten**: fell, passed
1764 **That**: so that **bonchef**: well-being **brek hem bitwene**: was
broached (i.e. uttered) between them
1765 **wynne**: joy
1766 **laused**: uttered
1767 **wele**: pleasure
1769 'If Mary should not take thought for (i.e. come to the aid of) her
knight'
1770 **of pris**: noble **depresed**: pressed **thikke**: hard
1771 **Nurned him so negh the thred**: pushed him so close to the
limit
1772 **Other**: either **lach**: accept **lodly**: in an offensive way
1773 **lest crathayn he were**: lest he should act as a churl
1774–5 'And (he cared) more about his (spiritual) perdition, were he
to commit a sin and be a traitor to the man who owned that dwelling'
1776 **God schylde**: God forbid
1777 **a lyte**: a little **layd him biside**: parried, deflected
1778 **speeches of specialte**: utterances indicating special affection for
him
1780 **lif that ye lye nexte**: creature whom you are placed next to

1781 **Before all the wyes in the worlde**: more than anyone in the world

1782 'Unless you have a sweetheart, someone dearer, who pleases you better (than I do)'

1783–4 'And (have) given your faith to that noble (lady), bound so firmly that it does not please you to loosen (that knot) – and that is what I now believe'

1786–7 'For all the "loves" on earth I could conjure you by (i.e. for the love of God, Mary, your lady, etc), don't conceal the truth out of dishonesty'

1789 **smethely**: meaningfully **con he smyle**: he smiled

1790–91 'In faith, I possess none, nor do I at present wish to possess one'

1792 **word**: statement **wyght**: creature, person

1793 'But I have in truth been answered in such a way as gives me pain'

1794 **comly**: nicely, kindly **cach hethen** [hence]: go away

1795 'I can only grieve on earth, as a maid who loves greatly'

1796 **Sykande**: sighing **sweye doun**: stooped down

1797 **sithen**: then **ho severes him fro**: she disengages herself from him **ho standes**: she straightens herself

1798 **do me this ese**: give me this comfort

1800 **That I may mynne on thee:** whereby I might remember you
mournyng: grief

1801 **I wolde:** I would that, I wish

1802 **levest:** dearest, most precious **in londe welde:** have in the world

1803 **sellyly** [wondrously] **ofte:** on so many occasions

1804 **by resoun:** rightly **then I reche myghte:** than I could give

1805 'But (as something) to give you as a love token, that (i.e. a glove: see 1799) would be worth only an insignificant amount'

1806 **Hit is not your honour:** it is not consistent with your honour

1807 **garysoun:** treasure, item of value

1808 **on erande:** on business **erdes uncouth:** lands unknown to me

1809 **men:** servants **males:** bags **menskfulle:** elegant, fine

1810 **for luf:** because of my regard for you

1811–12 'Each man **mon** [must] act according to the situation he finds himself in; don't take it as any offence or injury to yourself'

1813 **hende of high honoures:** courteous (man) whom all honour highly

1814 **that lufsum under lyne** (a tag): that lovely (lady) in linen

1815–16 'Even though I didn't have anything of yours, yet might you have (something) of mine'

- 1817 **raght**: held out to **of red golde werkes**: whose design was of pure gold
- 1818 **starande**: shining **standande alofte**: projecting from it
- 1819 **bere**: bore, had **bluschande bemes**: gleaming beams
- 1820 **wele**: wealth
- 1821 **renk**: man **renayed**: refused
- 1822 **for goode**: seriously, truly **my gay**: my fair lady
- 1823 **norne**: return
- 1824 **bede**: offered **bode**: offer **wernes**: refuses
- 1825 **sothe**: truth, troth **sese nolde**: would not take
- 1826 **forsoke**: refused
- 1827 **renay**: refuse **to rich for hit semes**: because it seems too valuable
- 1828 **holden**: beholden
- 1829 **gaynes yow lesse**: brings you less profit
- 1830 'She took a belt of soft fabric that was fastened around her waist'
- 1831 **Knit upon**: fastened round **kyrtel**: under-tunic **clere**: splendid
- 1832 **Gered**: fashioned **schaped**: designed, trimmed
- 1833 'Simply inlaid all round and inset by the fingers (of ladies who did the stitchwork)'
- 1834 **blythely**: eagerly
- 1835 **unworthy**: of no value

- 1836 **nay that he nolde negh** [approach] **in no wyse**: denied that he would in any way associate himself with
- 1837 **garysoun**: treasure, valuables
- 1838 **acheve to**: succeed in reaching **chaunce**: adventure
- 1840–41 ‘And desist from your persistence, for I will never consent to grant this’
- 1842 **derely**: very much
- 1843 **semblaunt**: kind behaviour
- 1845 **To be**: i.e. obliged (**beholde**: 1842) to be
- 1846 **silk**: silken belt **burde**: lady
- 1847 **symple**: not grand, humble **so hit wel semes**: so it indeed seems to be
- 1849 **costes**: qualities, properties
- 1850 **prayse**: appraise, rate **more pris**: greater value **paraventure**: perhaps
- 1851 **what gome so is gurde**: whatever man is girt
- 1852 **hemely**: ?closely **halched aboute**: fastened around him
- 1853 **to-hewe him that myghte**: who could cut him down
- 1854 **for sleight upon erthe**: by any sleight in the world
- 1855 **caste**: thought, deliberated

- 1856 'It would be a jewel indeed for the plight ordained for him'
- 1857 **acheved to:** arrived at **chek:** doom, fate **feche:** receive
- 1858 'Could he have got away without being slain, it would be a grand stratagem'
- 1859 **thulged with:** tolerated, put up with **threpe:** insistence **tholed:** suffered, allowed
- 1860 **bere on:** pressed upon **bede:** offered **swythe:** earnestly
- 1861 **him gave:** (she) gave (it) to him
- 1862 **discover hit:** to reveal it (i.e. the fact of the gift)
- 1863 **lelly:** loyally **layne:** conceal **him acordes:** agrees
- 1864 **wit:** know **bot thay twayne:** apart from the two of them
- 1865 **For noght:** not for anything in the world
- 1866 **ful swythe:** very much
- 1867 **thro:** with energy, warmly
- 1868 'By then on a threesome of times'; the lady's present parting kiss follows those given at 1758 and 1796
- 1869 **toght:** tough, stout
- 1870 **laches:** takes
- 1871 **more mirth of:** more joy out of, more of what she wanted from
- 1872 **geres him:** gets himself ready

1873 **riches him**: dresses himself

1874 **Lays up**: puts away **raghte**: delivered, gave

1875 **holdely**: securely **there he hit eft fonde**: where he might find it again

1876 **chefly**: first of all

1878–9 'That he would hear his confession and give him better instruction as to how his soul should be saved when he should pass hence'

1880 **schrof him schyrly**: confessed himself completely

1881 **Of the more and the mynne**: the greater and the smaller

1882 'And he calls on the man for absolution'

1883a **asoyled**: absolved

1883b–84 'and rendered him as free from sin as (he would need to be) if Judgement Day had been appointed for the morrow' (mercy for sin being no longer be available on Doomsday)

1885 **mas him as mery**: makes as merry **fre**: noble

1886 **comlyche caroles**: delightful dance-songs **all kynnes**: all kinds of

1887 **to**: until

1889–90 **had daynte ... Of**: took admiring pleasure in

1891 **are**: previously

1892 **Syn**: since **ere this**: before now

1893 'Now let him remain in that **lee** [shelter] – where may joy befall him'; **bityde** is *subjunctive (expressing a wish)*, and **there** is *thus poised between a relative ('where') and the adverb as used to introduce a wish* (cf. 839, 2120)

1894 **Yet: still on the launde:** in the field **ledande his gamnes:** pursuing his sport

1895 **forfaren:** got ahead (in order to block the path) of

1896 **sprent:** sprang, galloped **spenne:** patch of open ground

schrewe: miscreant, wretch

1897 **Thereas:** where **hasted him swythe:** drove him on hard

1898 **richchande:** making his way **greve:** grove

1899 **rabel:** noisy pack **res:** rush

1900 **wylde:** wild animal **warly:** watchfully

1901 **braydes out:** draws out **bronde:** sword **castes:** lunges

1902 **schunt:** blenched **the scharp:** the sharp weapon **schulde have**

arered: was about to retreat

1903 **rach:** running hound **rapes him to:** rushes at him **ere he**

myghte: before he could do so

1904 **horse** (*uninflected gen*): horse's

1905 **woried me this wyly:** tore at the wily (creature); **me** is *the so-called ethic dative, an idiomatic use of the first-person pronoun in narrative, presenting the narrator as a mental spectator of the action* (cf. 1932)

1906 **lyghtes bylive:** dismounts quickly **laches:** takes hold of

1907 **Rased:** tore **radly:** hurriedly **rach** (*uninflected gen*): the hounds'

1908 **halowes faste:** cries 'halloo' vigorously

- 1909 **bayen him**: bay to announce capture of him (cf. 1362) **bremly**: fiercely **brothe**: fierce
- 1910 **Huntes**: huntsmen **hyed hem**: hurried
- 1911 **rechatande**: blowing the horn summons **renk**: man **sawen**: saw
- 1912 **By that**: When
- 1915 **meriest**: most pleasing **mute**: pack-baying, i.e. clamour
- 1916 **rich rurd**: glorious noise **Reynarde saule**: Reynard's soul
- 1917 **With lote**: with sound
- 1919 **fawne**: caress, stroke **frote**: rub
- 1920 **tan**: take
- 1921 **tyrven of**: strip off
- 1922 **helden to**: head for **negh**: near
- 1923 **Strakande**: blowing horn signals **store**: sturdy
- 1924 **is lyght**: has arrived
- 1925 **upon flet**: on the hall floor **the freke therebyside**: the man (Gawain) beside it
- 1926 **goode** is Gawain's sobriquet (cf. e.g. 109, 633)
- 1928 **wer**: wore **bleaunt**: overgarment, robe **bradde to**: extended to

- 1929 **surkot**: overtunic (visible under the mantle) **semed him wel**: looked well on him
- 1930 **of that ilke**: of the same (material), i.e. matching
- 1931 'Both were lined all round with **blaunner** [a kind of fur]'
- 1932 **me** (*ethic dative*: see footgloss to 1905) is redundant to sense
- goodman**: head of household
- 1933 **game**: sport, jolliness **gret**: greeted **godly**: with good humour
- 1934 **fylle**: fulfil **nowthe**: now
- 1935 **spedly**: in proper form **there**: where (on the **drinke**, see footgloss to 1112)
- 1936 **acoles**: embraces
- 1937 'As savouringly and as earnestly as he could deliver them'
- 1938b–39 'You come by much profit in the purchase of these goods, if the price was good'
- 1940 **Ye, of the chepe no charge**: oh, never mind about the price
- chefly**: promptly
- 1941 'The gains that I owed (to you) being clearly paid'
- 1942 **Mary**: by (the Virgin) Mary **bihinde**: inferior
- 1944 **felle**: pelt **the fende have the godes**: may the devil take the goods
- 1945 **pris**: valuable
- 1946 **thryght**: delivered to **thro**: heartily

1949 **rode**: cross

1952 **metes**: foodstuffs, dishes

1953b–56 ‘as any men could have done ... unless the company had lost their wits or else had been drunk’

1954 **lotes of bourdes**: jesting words

1957 **man and the meyny**: the lord and his household **japes**: jests

1958 **sesoun**: time **seyen**: come **sever moste**: had to part

1959 ‘At last men had (to go) to their beds’

1960 **lowly**: humbly

1961 **Foches**: takes **fre**: noble

1962–3 **Of ... the High-Kyng yow yelde**: for ... may God reward you
sellyly: wonderful **Your honour**: your honourable behaviour **high fest**: major festival

1964 ‘I give myself to you as one of your men, if it pleases you’

1966–8 ‘If you give me some man to show, as you promised, the road to the Green Chapel, as God will suffer the sentence of my fate to be dealt to me on New Year’s Day’

- 1970 **redy**: punctually, punctiliously
- 1972 **coundue**: escort **downes**: hills **drechch**: delay
- 1973 **ferk**: go **frith**: wood **fare at the gaynest**: go by the most direct route
- 1975–6 ‘Gawain thanked the lord for being willing do him such honour’
- 1977 **wlonk**: noble
- 1978 **tan**: taken
- 1979 **care**: sorrow **carpes hem tille**: talks to them
- 1980 **fele**: many **thryvande**: profuse **thrat**: compelled
- 1981 **yelden him ayain**: returned to him **yeply**: promptly **that ilke**: the same (thanks)
- 1982 **bikende**: commended **sykynges**: sighing
- 1983 **meyny**: household **menskly**: courteously
- 1985 **and his sere** [distinct, separate] **pine**: and the specific trouble taken by each
- 1986 ‘With which they had been busy around him in order to serve him’
- 1988 ‘As if they had always dwelt with that splendid man’, i.e. as if Gawain had been a member of the family they served
- 1989 **ledes and lyght**: servants and torchlight

- 1991 'Whether he will sleep soundly, I would not venture to say'
- 1992 **mynne**: think about
- 1995 **ner**: nearly, almost **that**: that which
- 1996 **And**: if **stille**: quiet
- 1998 **neghes**: approaches
- 1999 **drives to**: follows
- 2000 **wederes of the worlde**: storms of the season **thereoute**: outside
- 2002 'With pain enough from the north to afflict the naked (flesh)' (cf. 423)
- 2003 **snitered**: snowed down **snart**: bitterly, smartingly **that**: which
- snapped**: nipped with cold **the wylde**: wild animals
- 2004 **werbelande**: shrilling **wapped**: whapped down **highe**: high ground
- 2008 'Each time the cock crew he well knew (that it was close to the hour stipulated in) the agreement'
- 2009 **Deliverly**: nimbly **dressed up**: got up **sprenged**: broke

2010 **lemed**: shone

2011 The **chamberlayn** is the servant appointed at 850–51 to assist Gawain to dress **cofly**: promptly **swared**: answered

2012 **bruny**: coat of mail **blonk sadel**: horse's saddle

2013 **ferkes him up**: gets up

2014 **graythes**: dresses **me** is *ethic dative* (cf. 1905, 1932)

2015 **were**: keep off

2016 **harnays**: armour **holdely**: faithfully **was keped**: had been looked after

2017 **paunce**: stomach armour **plates**: back and breast plates **piked**: freed from dirt

2018 'The rings of mail of his splendid hauberk rocked free of rust'; mail was burnished by rolling it

2019 **fayn**: glad, happy

2021 **uch pece**: each piece of armour

2022 **Wypped**: wiped **wlonk**: splendidly

2023 'The most splendidly equipped (man) from here to Greece'

2024 'The man commanded his horse to be fetched'

2026–8 '(Culminating in) his coat-armour with the heraldic cognizance (i.e. the pentangle: see 636–7) of beautiful workmanship, decoratively picked out upon velvet (by means of) potent gems inlaid and inset here and there and embroidered stitchwork'

2029 **pelures**: pelts, pieces of fur
2031 **good**: behoof
2032 **By**: when **bronde**: sword **balwe haunches**: the curve of his hips
2033 **dressed**: arranged **drury**: love token **double**: twice
2034 'The man firmly wound it neatly around his waist'
2035 **that gay wel bisemed**: suited that fine (man) well
2036 'Set against the magnificent red cloth that was rich to behold'
2037 **wered**: wore **ilk wye**: same man **wele**: (its) costliness
2038 **pryde**: splendour **pendauntes**: hanging ends (often richly ornamented: the present ones are inlaid with gold) **polysed**: embellished
2039 **glyterande**: glittering
2040 **when suffer him behoved**: when he would have to suffer passively
2041–2 'Endure harm without resistance by sword or knife to protect himself'
2043 **By that**: When **boun**: ready in his armour
2044 **Wynnes**: goes **bylive**: quickly
2045 **meyny of renoun**: worthy household
2046 **ryve**: abundantly

- 2047 **Gryngolet**: Gawain's horse (see 597) **grayth**: ready
- 2048 **sojourned**: lodged, stalled **saverly**: comfortably **in a siker wyse**: safely
- 2049 'That fine horse was then keen to go, because of being in condition'
- 2050 **wynnes**: goes **wytes on his lere**: looks in his face
- 2051 **soberly**: seriously, earnestly **soth**: troth
- 2052 **meyny**: household **mote**: castle **mensk**: honour, courtesy
- 2053 **The man hem maynteines**: The man who provides for them; *omission of relative pronoun*
- 2054 **lef**: dear **on lyve** [alive] is a tag **luf her bityde**: may joy befall her
- 2055 **cherysen**: extend favour and protection to
- 2056–7 '... And take honour by the hand, may the man who rules heaven on high (i.e. God) reward them, and also all of you' (**yow alle**: the members of the **meyny** who have courtyard duties and whom Gawain is addressing: see 2043–6)
- 2058 **lif upon londe lede any while**: live on earth for any length of time; Gawain knows he may soon die
- 2059 **reche**: give
- 2060 **strydes alofte**: mounts, gets astride
- 2061 **His schalk** [man] refers (as does **his hathel** at 2065) to the guide allotted to Gawain by the lord (1971–2) **laghte**: took, i.e. hung
- 2062 **Gyrdes to**: strikes **gilt heles**: heels with gilded spurs (see n. to 587)
- 2063 **startes**: springs forward

2067 **kenne**: commend

2068 **He gyve**: may He give

2069 **brygge**: drawbridge **brayde doun**: lowered

2070 **born open upon bothe halve**: pushed open on each side; the gate is a double one

2071 **blessed him**: crossed himself **bredes**: planks (of the drawbridge)

2072–4 ‘Says complimentary things to the porter, (who) knelt before the nobleman, commended him to God and wished him good day, (praying) that He would save Gawain, and (Gawain) went on his way accompanied only by his man’

2075 **turne**: go **tene**: painful, terrible

2076 **There**: where **rufulle race**: sorry sweeping stroke

2077 **bonkes**: hills **boghes**: boughs

2078 **there**: where

2079 ‘The cloud cover was high, but it looked sinister underneath’

2080 **muged**: drizzled **malt**: fell as rain

2081 **hatte**: hat **mist-hakel**: mist-robe

2082–4 ‘Brooks bubbled and broke into foam here and there by the hillsides, striking with a sparkle against the banks by which they (= the brooks) forced their way downwards. Most tortuous was the path they had (to follow) through the wood’

2086 **That tyde:** that time of year
2088 **biside:** nearby, around (them)
2089 **him by:** next to him
2090 'Told his master to pause'
2091 **wonnen:** brought
2092 **nar:** are not **note:** notorious
2093 **spied and spured ... after:** sought and inquired after
2096 'If you would act on my advice you would be better off'
2097 **pres:** press forward
2098 **wones:** lives
2099 **stif:** strong
2100 **more:** bigger **myddelerde:** the earth (between heaven and hell)
2101 **bigger:** stronger
2103 **He cheves that chaunce:** he always has the good fortune (that)
2104 **so proud in his armes:** so splendidly armed
2105 **dynges:** beats **dint:** blow

2106 **methles**: without restraint

2107–8 **chorle** [peasant] **other** [or] **chaplayn ... Monk other**

masseprest: i.e. even persons who do not profess arms, non-knights

2109 ‘It seems as desirable to him to kill him as to be himself alive’

2110 **soth**: truly, certainly

2111 ‘If you come there, you will be killed, if the knight has his way’

2112 **Trowe ye me that**: believe you that

2114 **ful yore**: for a very long time

2115 **bent**: (battle-)field **baret**: strife **bende**: brought about

2116 **Ayain**: Against

2118 **let the gome one**: leave the man alone

2119 ‘And go away by a different route, for God’s sake’

2120 ‘Go to some other land, where Christ may **spede** [prosper] you’

2121 **hye me**: hurry **hete**: promise **ferre**: furthermore

2122 **halwes**: saints

2123 ‘ “So help me God and the holy relics,” and many (other) oaths’

2124 **lelly**: faithfully **yow layne**: conceal you (i.e. keep quiet about it)

lause: utter

2125 ‘That you ever sought to flee because of any man I ever knew’

- 2126 **Grant merci:** Many thanks **gruchyng:** grudgingly
- 2127 'May good fortune befall you, man, (you) who desire my welfare'
- 2128 **leve:** believe
- 2129 'But, however **holde** [faithfully] you held it (= your promise), if I left this place ... '
- 2130 **Fonded:** sought **for ferde:** out of fear
- 2131 **were:** would be
- 2132 **chose:** proceed **for chaunce that may falle:** no matter what may befall
- 2133 **that ilk tulk:** that same man **me lyste:** may please me
- 2134 **Worth hit wele other wo:** whether weal or woe should come of it **the wyrde:** fate
- 2136 **knape:** carl, fellow
- 2137 **stightel:** stand against **stad with stave:** furnished with a staff; giants in romance typically used the churl's club or staff, rather than the chivalric sword
- 2138 'The Lord can well contrive'
- 2140 **so much spelles:** go as far as to say
- 2141 **nye:** harm **nyme:** take
- 2142 'If it pleases you to lose your life, I do not care to prevent you'

- 2144 **rake**: path; *ethic dative me* [for me] *has no equivalent in ModE*
(cf. 2112)
- 2145 **brem**: big
- 2146 **launde**: level space, clearing **lyfte**: left
- 2147 **slade**: valley
- 2148 **borlyche**: burly **on bent**: on the (battle-)field **kepes**: guards
- 2149 **fares** (*imp* 'go, fare') **wel** is a 'farewell' formula
- 2150 **molde**: would not
- 2151 **frith**: forest **on**: one
- 2152 **By that**: Thereupon **wendes**: turns
- 2153 **heles**: i.e. spurred heels
- 2154 **Lepes him**: gallops **launde**: open ground
- 2157 **grete**: weep
- 2158 **bayn**: obedient
- 2159 **me tone**: betaken/committed myself
- 2160 **gyrdes he to**: he puts the spurs to **gederes the rake**: enters on the path
- 2161 **Schowves in**: strikes in **schore**: cliff **schawe side**: the edge of a grove
- 2162 **thurgh the rogh bonk**: down the rugged slope

- 2163 **wayted**: looked **hit him thoghte**: it seemed to him
- 2164 **no syngne of resette** [accommodation]: i.e. nothing resembling a building **bisides**: in the vicinity
- 2165 **brent**: steep
- 2166 **knoklede knarres**: knobbly crags **knornede**: gnarled, knobbly
- 2167 'The skies seemed to him to be **skayned** [scraped, grazed] by the **scowtes** [jutting rocks, crags]'
- 2168 **hoved**: paused **withhelde**: held back
- 2169 **chaunged his chere**: looked this way and that (cf. 711)
- 2170 **selly him thoghte**: it seemed strange to him
- 2171–2 'Except, just a little, on a clearing, what seemed to be a mound, the bulge of a barrow by a cliff beside the water's edge'
- 2173 'By the channel of a stream that ran there'; this is apparently a different stream, running down into the one referred to at 2172
- 2174 **borne**: stream **blubred**: seethed
- 2175 **cache his caple**: moves his horse forward **lawe**: mound
- 2176 **lynde**: 'lime tree', poeticism for 'tree' **taches**: fastens
- 2177 **hit riched with**: fastened it by means of
- 2178 **bowes**: goes **berwe**: barrow
- 2179 **Debatande**: debating

- 2181 **glodes**: patches
2182 **nobot**: nothing but/only
2183 **deme**: judge
2184 **spelle**: words
2185 **We**: ah! **gentyl**: good
2186 **Whether this be**: could this be; **whether** was used in *ME* to introduce direct questions
2188 **Dele** is a shortened form of ‘*devel*’ [*devil*] **matynes**: the midnight office of Matins
2189 **wysty**: waste, desolate
2190 **oritore**: oratory **ugly**: sinister, eerie **erbes**: grasses
2191–2 ‘It well befits the man set out in green to perform his devotions here in the manner of the devil’
2193 **fyve wyttes**: five senses
2194 **stoken me this steven**: fixed this meeting for me **to strye**: in order to destroy
2195 **that chek hit bityde**: may evil befall it (**that ... hit**: which)
2196 **corsedest**: most accursed **kyrk**: church
2198 **roffe**: roof **tho ... wones**: that dwelling

2199 **of:** out of, coming from **in a hard roche:** i.e. within a cleft in the cliff where the rockface was bare

2200 **wonder:** very **breme:** intense, loud

2201 **as hit cleve schulde:** as if it (i.e. the cliff) were splitting

2202 **As:** as if **gryndelston:** grindstone **sythe:** scythe

2203 **wharred:** whirred **whette:** made a whetting sound **mulne:** mill

2204 **rusched:** made a rushing noise **ronge:** rang out **routhe to here:** grievous to hear

2205b–7 ‘this business, as I believe, is being put on in my honour, in order to receive me fittingly, in due form’

2208 **worke:** do His will **we lo:** alas!

2209 ‘There’s no help to be had’

2211 ‘No **lote** [sound] will cause me to feel dread’

2212 **highe:** loudly

2213 ‘Who presides in this place, to keep the appointment with me?’

2214 **good** is Gawain’s sobriquet (see 109) **goande:** walking

2215–16 ‘If any man wants anything, let him come here fast, either now or never, to conclude his business’

2218 **that I thee hyght ones:** what I once promised you

- 2219 'He went on with that rushing sound busily for a little while yet'
2220 'And remained drawn aside with his whetting before he would come down'
2221 **keveres by**: comes round **comes of a hole**: comes out of a crevice
2222 **Whyrlande**: whirling **wro**: nook
2223 'A Danish axe newly made ready with which to deliver the blow'
2224 'With a large blade curving outward from the shaft'
2225 **Fyled in a fylor**: sharpened by a sharpening device
2226 **by that lace**: as measured by that girdle **lemed**: shone
2227 **gered as firste**: decked out as he had been before
2228 **lere**: face
2229 **on his fote** [feet]: i.e. not mounted, as he had been when first seen **foundes**: makes his way
2230 'Knocked the stony ground with the shaft as he strode with it at his side'
2231 **wan to**: reached **there**: where **nolde** (*ne + wolde*): did not want to
2232 **hypped**: jumped, vaulted **orpedly**: boldly
2233 **Bremly brothe on a bent**: very fierce on a field
2235 'Sir Gawain went to meet the knight'
2236 'He bowed to him by no means low'
2238 'One can trust you to keep an appointment'

2239 **God thee mot loke:** May God watch over you
2241 **travayl:** onerous journey **true:** faithful, honest
2242 **cast:** made
2243 **twelmonyth:** twelve months ago **that thee falled:** what was
due to you
2244 **schulde ... yeply thee quyte:** was to repay you promptly
2245 **our one:** on our own
2246 **ryd:** separate **rele as us likes:** (we can) lay about us as it pleases
us
2247 **Haf ... of:** take ... from
2248 **Busk no more debate:** put up no more of a battle **bede:** offered
2249 **wypped:** whipped **at a wap one:** with only one blow
2250 **that me gost lante:** who gave me the spirit of life
2251 'I shall not be reluctant to grant you a jot, no matter what harm
befalls'
2252 **stightel thee upon:** confine yourself to **on:** one
2253 **warp thee no wernyng:** make you no resistance
2254 **Nowhare:** at no point
2255 **lutte:** bowed
2256 **that schyre:** the gleaming (flesh)
2257 **let as:** behaved as if **noght dutte:** feared nothing
2258 **dare:** cower

- 2259 **graythed him swythe**: made great preparations
2260 **Gederes up**: lifts
2261 **bur**: power
2262 **Mynt**: directed the blow **marre**: destroy
2263 **as drye as he attled**: as straight as he aimed it
2264 'He who was ever doughty would there have been dead from his blow'
2265 **giserne**: battleaxe **glyfte him biside**: glanced up sideways
2266 **on glode**: on the patch of ground **schende**: destroy
2267 **for the scharp yrne**: because of the sharp iron (i.e. weapon)
2268 **schalk**: man **schunt**: jerk **the schene**: the shining (axe)
2270 **good** alludes to Gawain's sobriquet (cf. 2214 and see 109)
2271 **arwed**: was afraid **here**: army
2272 **fles**: flee **ferde**: fear
2273 **couth I never here**: I never did hear
2274 **fyked**: retreated **flagh**: fled **myntest**: directed the blow
2275 'Nor made any cavilling in King Arthur's house'
2276 Wordplay on **flagh** (*past tense of both 'fly' and 'flee'*)

2277 **ere any harme hent**: before having received any harm **arwes**:
take fright
2278 **Wherefore**: for which reason **me burde**: I should
2280 **schunt**: drew back, recoiled
2281 'And I will do so no more'
2284 **busk**: proceed, get on **poynthe**: critical moment
2285 **out of hande**: without fuss
2286 **stande thee a stroke**: endure one blow from you (cf. 294)
starte: start back
2288 **Haf at thee**: Have at you! **heves**: lifts
2289 **waytes as wrothly**: glares with as much rage **wod**: mad
2290 **myntes**: directs the blow **rynes**: cuts
2291 **heterly**: sharply
2292 **graythly**: firmly **hit bides**: awaits it (= the blow) **glent**:
flinched
2293 **or a stubbe other**: or else a tree stump
2294 **ratheled is in**: is twined into **roche**: rocky
2295 **con he mele**: he spoke
2296 **hert**: courage **hole**: intact

2297–8 ‘Now may the high order (of knighthood) which Arthur bestowed on you preserve you and protect your collarbone in this plight, if it can manage (to do so)’

2299 **gryndelly**: angrily **greme**: wrath

2300 **thresch**: strike **thro**: bold **thretes**: threaten **to**: too

2301 ‘I think that you have managed to scare yourself’ (**arwe with**: is intimidated by)

2302 **felly**: fiercely

2303 **on lyte** [in delay] **lette** [hinder]: hold up, put off **ernde**: business, mission

2305 **tas**: takes **strythe**: stance, posture

2306 **frounses**: creases, puckers

2307–8 ‘No wonder if it should be unpleasant for him who expected no rescue’

2309 **lome**: tool, weapon

2310 ‘With the curving outer edge of the blade (coming down) on the bare neck’

2311–12 ‘Though he struck forcefully, he hurt him no further than to graze him on the one side, so that the skin was broken’

2313 **The scharp**: the sharp blade **schrunk to**: sank into **schyre grece**: bright fat

2314 **That**: so that **schene**: bright

2315 **blenk**: shine
2316 **sprit forth**: spurted forward **spenne-fote**: with feet together
2317 **heterly**: quickly, eagerly
2318 'Shot himself by a shoulder movement under his fair shield'; the shield lay on the knight's back when not in use
2319 **Braydes out**: draws **bremly**: fiercely
2322 **Blynne**: cease **bur**: (aiming of) blows **bede me no mo**: proffer me no more (blows)
2323 **a**: one **hente**: received
2324 **quyte**: give requital
2325 'And **yelde ... ayayn** [repay]immediately, be sure of that'
2326 **foo** (*adv*): as a foe (i.e. not with the submissiveness Gawain has so far shown)
2327 **on**: one **me falles**: is due to me
2328 **schop**: prescribed
2330 **hende**: courteous (man)/sir **hoo**: stop! enough!
2331 **helded him fro**: stepped back from him
2332 **upon schore**: aslant **to the scharp lened**: leaned upon the bladed end
2333 **launde**: clearing **yede**: went

2334 **that doghty**: that brave (man) **dredles**: fearless **derfly**: boldly
2335 **awles**: unawed, unafraid **hit him likes**: it pleases him
2336 **meles**: speaks **meryly**: good-humouredly, unaggressively **much steven**: loud voice
2337 **ryngande**: ringing **rurd**: sound
2338 **bent**: (battle-)field **gryndel**: fierce
2339 **mysboden**: mistreated
2340 'Nor acted towards you other than as agreement at the king's court prescribed'
2341 **hyght**: promised **a**: one (cf. 2323, 2327) **holde thee**: consider yourself
2342 'I release you from the remainder of all the other rights I could have claimed'
2343 **deliver**: unrestrained **buffet**: blow **paraunter**: perhaps
2344 **wrothloker**: more fiercely **waret**: delivered **to thee have wrought anger**: and (could) have given you anguish
2345 **mansed**: threatened **meryly**: in sport, non-aggressively **with a mynt one**: with a feint alone
2346 **rove**: cut **rof-sore**: gash **thee profered**: took aim at you
2347 **For**: because of **fest**: fastened, confirmed
2348 'And you keep to me your pledged troth trustily and faithfully'
2350–51 **other**: second **the morn ... Thou**: the next day when you **clere**: beautiful **raghtes**: handed over

2352-3 'For both these two (occasions) I gave you nothing here except
two mere feints, without harm'
2354 'A true (man) **mon** [must] truly restore'
2355 **thar**: need **wathe**: danger
2356 **thrid**: third (occasion) **thore**: there,in that respect
2357 **ta thee**: take to yourself
2358 **wede**: item of clothing
2359 **weved**: gave
2360 **costes**: behaviour
2361 **wowyng**: amorousness
2362 **asay**: test **me thinkes**: it seems to me (that you are)
2363 **On the fautleste**: singly the most faultless
2364 **by**: compared with **white pese**: white pea (white peas were used
as pig food) **pris more**: greater value
2366 'But here there was a little wanting in you, sir, and fidelity was
lacking in you'; *'lack' and 'want' are both impersonal verbs*
2367 **wylyde werk**: intricate(?) workmanship (of the girdle)
wowyng: amorousness
2369 **stif**: strong **in study**: in thought
2370 **agreved for greme**: mortified **gryed**: shuddered

2371 **blende in:** suffused
2372 **that the schalk talked:** (at) what the man said
2373 **forme:** first **upon folde:** on the ground, i.e. there **meled:** spoke
2374 **worthe** (*subj*): be
2375 **vilany:** baseness **disstryes:** destroy
2376 **caght to:** laid hold of **cast:** tie, fastening **lauses:** unties
2377 **Brayde:** held out **brothely:** angrily
2378 'There is the (thing that occasioned) false dealing, may it go ill with it!'
2379–81 'Because of anxiety about your blow, cowardice instructed me to make terms with covetousness, forsaking my nature (as a knight), which is the freedom in giving and the good faith belonging to knights'
2382 **ferde:** afraid
2383b–84 'may misery and trouble betide both of them'
2385 **stille:** submissively
2387 **overtake your wille:** gain your good will
2388 **eft:** from now on **ware:** wary (not to repeat the offence)
2389 **loghe:** laughed **luflyly:** with friendliness
2390 **hardily:** assuredly **hole:** healed **harme:** injury

2391–3 **Thou art confessed so clene ... I holde thee:** you have made so clean a confession ... that I consider you **beknownen of:** (have) acknowledged **mysses:** misdeeds
2392 ‘And you have received the penance clear to see of (the mark left by) the point of my blade’; penance was a necessary part of a valid confession
2393 **polysed of that plyght:** rubbed clean of that sin
2394 **forfeted:** transgressed
2395 **gold-hemmed:** trimmed or edged with gold
2396 **For:** since
2397 **this ilke threpe:** this same contest **there:** where **thrynges:** press, go
2398 **princes of pris:** great noblemen **pure:** very, veritable
2399 **chaunce:** adventure **at:** in the presence of **chevalrous:** noted for prowess in arms
2400 **schal:** shall come; *omission of verb of motion* **wones:** dwelling
2401 **schyn revel:** shall spend in revel **riche feste:** splendid festival
2402 **bene:** pleasantly
2403 **lathed:** invited
2404 **wene:** believe
2408 **has hit of:** takes it off **hendly:** courteously

2409 **sojourned**: been lodged, enjoyed hospitality **sadly**: plentifully
sele yow bityde: may good fortune befall you
2410 'And may He who is the source of all (such) gracious acts fully
reward you for it'
2411 **comaundes me**: give my compliments **that cortays**: that courtly
lady **fere**: spouse
2413 **her**: their **cast**: trick, stratagem **coyntly**: neatly
2414 **ferly**: wonder **fol**: fool **madde**: should commit folly
2416 **with one**: by one (woman)
2417 **with fele sere**: by many different (women) **eftsones**: likewise
2418 **wyrde**: fate
2419 **blended with**: blinded by (his passion for) **that** [who] refers to
David **tholed**: suffered
2420 'Since these men were brought to grief through their wiles, it
would be an enormous blessing ...'
2421 **leve**: believe **a lede that couthe**: if a man could
2422-4 'For these were in former times the greatest, whom every
blessing (i.e. wisdom, strength, etc) attended to a degree that
surpasses all other men who have **mused** [dwelled] under the
kingdom of heaven'
2426 **used**: had relations with

2428 **Me think me burde**: it seems to me I should; *both think and burde are impersonal verbs*
2429 **God yow foryelde**: may God reward you for it
2430 **wynne**: delightful
2431 **saynt**: fabric cincture **syde**: long **pendauntes**: the (often highly ornamented) hanging ends of a girdle (see 2038–9)
2432 **wele**: costliness **worschip**: i.e. the respect it might command
wlonk werkes: splendid workmanship
2433 **surfet**: transgression
2434 **remorde to myselven**: recall with remorse
2435 **fayntyse**: weakness **crabbed**: perverse, graceless
2436 **entyse**: attract **teches**: blemishes
2437 **prik**: stimulate
2438 **lethe**: lower, bring down
2439 **one**: one thing **displeases yow** (*reflexive imp*): be not displeased
2440 **lent**: resided
2441b–42a ‘may He reward you for it who holds up the heavens’
2443 **norne**: call
2444b Linking alliteration on **that** other
2445 **hat**: am named

2446 **Thurgh myght of:** i.e. and I rule Hautdesert through the power of **lenges:** resides

2447–8 ‘And, by **craftes** [skills] well learned, has **taken** [acquired] **quoyntyse of clergye** [learned arts] and many of the **maystres** [specialist skills] of Merlin’

2449 **dalt drury:** had a love affair

2450a **conable clerk:** accomplished clerk

2450b–51 ‘that fact all your knights at home know’

2454 **Weldes:** possesses **hawtesse:** arrogance

2455 **make ful tame:** fully subdue

2456 **wayned:** sent **upon this wyse:** in this fashion, i.e. as a green man **wynne:** beautiful

2457–8 ‘To test its pride in itself, if what is reported about the great glory of the Round Table were true’

2459 **wayved me this wonder:** furnished me with this wondrousness
reve: deprive you of

2460 **gart:** caused

2461 **glopnyng:** shock **gostlyche:** in an unearthly way

2463 **auncian:** of venerable age

2464 **even:** actually

2465–6 ‘The daughter of the duchess of Tintagel, upon whom noble
Uther later begot Arthur, who is now a great man’
2467 **ethe**: urge
2468 **meyny**: household
2469 **I wil thee as wel**: I wish you as well
2470 **under God**: i.e. on earth
2471 ‘And he said no, he would not (come) under any circumstances’
2472 **acolen**: embrace **kennen**: commend
2474 **On colde**: on the cold ground
2475 **on blonk ful bene**: full fair on horse
2476 **buskes bolde**: proceeds without delay
2477 **enker**: ?bright, vivid (cf. 150)
2480 **that the grace had gotten of his live**: who had received the
grace [free gift] of his life
2481 **herbered**: was lodged
2483 **tyght**: intend **remene**: recall, recount
2484 **hent**: received
2485 **blykkande**: glittering **thereabout**: around it (i.e. around his
neck)

2486 **Abelef**: diagonally **bauderyk**: baldric, shield strap
2487 **Loken**: tied
2488 **tan**: taken, detected **tech**: blemish
2489 **all in sounde**: i.e. safe and sound
2490 'Joy arose in that dwelling when the nobles knew ...'
2491 **gayn hit hem thoghte**: greatly to be welcomed it seemed to them
2493 **siker**: trusty **haylse**: greet
2494 'And who asked him about how he had fared, and he tells wondrously'
2495 **Beknowes**: reveals **costes of care**: hardships
2496 **chaunce**: adventure **chere**: behaviour
2498 **nirt**: nick
2499 **laght**: received **unleute**: bad faith
2501 **tened**: felt pain
2502 **grame**: anger (at himself)
2503 **con melle**: mingled, entered (cf. 2371)
2504 **schewe**: reveal, confess

2506 'This is the **bende** [heraldic term for diagonal band] that emblazons the mark of blameworthiness I bear in my neck'; the reference is to the girdle, worn slantwise across his body (see 2486)

2507 **lothe**: harm **laght**: received

2511 'For a man may hide his harm but may not unbind it (from his being)'

2512 **there**: where **is tached**: has attached itself **twynne**: part, detach itself

2514 **Laghen**: they laugh **luflyly**: with friendly good will

2516 **bauderyk**: baldric, shoulder strap

2517 **bende**: heraldic diagonal band **abelef him aboute** diagonally across himself

2518 **in sute**: matching each other (i.e. as a badge or livery: see *MED sute* n 1a(b))

2519 'For that (= the green band) was agreed to represent the glory of the Round Table'; **was governs both acorded and honoured in the next line**

2521 **breved**: written

2523 **Brutus bokes** are books of British history, so called from the foundation of Britain by Brutus (see 13–15)

2524 Sithen: Since the time that

2527–8 ‘Many such adventures have heretofore befallen before this time’

2529–30 ‘Now may He who wore the crown of thorns bring us to His bliss’

HONY SOYT QUI MAL PENCE [Shame be to him who thinks evil (of it)] is the motto of the Order of the Garter